THE RHETORIC OF POWER IN LATE ANTIQUITY

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN BYZANTIUM, EUROPE AND THE EARLY ISLAMIC WORLD

EDITED BY
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For Harold Allen Drake

CONTENTS

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FOREWORD

John W. I. Lee

The field of Late Antiquity has come a long way—thanks in no small part to the scholarship of H. A. Drake. Hal Drake was the first person I met in Santa Barbara. As I stepped off the plane, dazzled by the California sunlight after a winter in upstate New York, Hal welcomed me with the warmth and sincerity that are his hallmarks. In the decade since I arrived here, Hal has been an unfailing colleague, mentor, and friend. I am honored to have the opening word in this volume dedicated to him.

Hal came to UCSB in 1971 after completing his Ph.D. training at the University of Wisconsin. His scholarship and teaching made an immediate impression. In 1976 he won the Harold J. Plous Memorial Award, given to the best assistant professor on campus. He has continued to publish and teach with distinction since then.

Hal's scholarship is characterized by its command of the ancient and modern literature, its skillful and persuasive analysis, engaging style, and accessibility to non-specialists. As a historian of Classical Greece whose education included little of events after Constantine, I count myself as one of those non-specialists. I am especially grateful to Hal and his students for leading me to appreciate the vibrancy and significance of Late Antiquity.

Hal's success in advancing the study of his field goes beyond publications. Working with the Multi-Campus Research Group on Late Antiquity and other collaborative groups, he has helped make the University of California system one of the world's leading venues for the study of Mediterranean Late Antiquity.

At UCSB, Hal has trained a generation of outstanding graduate students, who have gone on to successful careers across the United States and beyond. Serving on graduate committees with him over the years, I have observed and admired his mentoring style. Hal demands the best from his students, and provides them the attention and support they need to thrive. Perhaps what most impresses me is that Hal's students are not

cookie-cutter copies of himself. As their contributions to this volume make clear, they have pursued diverse and innovative research projects, using new methods and approaches. In recognition of his achievements in graduate teaching, Hal received UCSB's campus-wide Graduate Mentor Award in 2007.

Hal has also introduced thousands of UCSB undergraduates to ancient history. He was an early adopter of teaching technology, including multimedia lecture presentations and video-linked graduate seminars. *Laws, Gods, and Heroes*, a collection of documents for Western Civilization courses that he and Joe Leedom edited, is now in its third edition and is widely used in survey courses across the country. Hal's former students, some from the 1970s, still come back to Santa Barbara to visit him.

Hal's devotion to UCSB and its students has always extended beyond the classroom. He has been History Department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies, as well as serving on myriad departmental and campus committees. He helped found the UCSB History Associates, a non-profit group that raises funds to support graduate students.

For most of us, all that would be enough. Not for Hal. For many years, he and his wife Kathy have opened their home to students, faculty, and visitors. Together, they have created a convivial, welcoming environment, where intellectual discussion pairs with delicious food and drink—not least of Hal's admirable qualities, by the way, is his ability to make a mean margarita. All of us who have enjoyed the Drakes' hospitality are eternally grateful to Hal and Kathy for their generosity.

Hal's commitment to ancient history and to students has continued even after his formal retirement. He and Kathy have established the Harold and Kathleen Drake Fund, which supports graduate students working in ancient Greek, Roman, and Chinese history. Hal still teaches occasional courses on a recall basis.

Hal represents the very best of the historical profession and the University of California. I join with colleagues, students, and friends in celebrating his career, and wish him many more years of health, prosperity, and ancient history!

INTRODUCTION

When discussing Christians in Rome's empire, we are accustomed to rhetoric in black and white tones, not unlike the old films portraying Jesus' followers as always righteous and the government they opposed as always decadent, slouching toward decline. For the era of Constantine, such binary oppositions have colored its rhetorical portrayals ever since Eusebius of Caesarea first named the emperor as the earthly savior of the Christian church.[1] Subsequent church historians willingly followed Eusebius' lead, even while Constantine was, conversely, vilified as a murderous brute by the sixth-century Zosimus, whose *Historia nova*, nostalgic for Rome's traditional cults, painted the emperor's Christianity as chosen merely because the bishops had promised to absolve his many sins.[2] Ironically, the legacy of Constantine's policies—as is the case for most Roman emperors—has been shaped less by the emperor's own words and intentions than by the appropriation of his deeds and edicts by authors eager to present them as evidence for their own quite distinct agendas. Accordingly, in studying the ancient record, modern historians have tended to preserve the rhetorical dichotomies of the sources. For example, in the mid-nineteenth century Jacob Burckhardt, taking off from Zosimus, argued that Constantine abandoned traditional cults for cynical reasons of *Realpolitik*.[3] T. D. Barnes, however, has more recently painted Constantine as a proto-Luther whose religious reforms eclipsed the moribund status quo.[4] Challenging these antagonistic interpretations, H. A. Drake's signal contribution to the study of Late Antiquity, and the understanding of Constantine, in particular, has been to fill in the intermediate tones, to find nuance, sophistication, and subtlety both in Constantine's policy and in the documents that testify to his reign. From Drake's scholarship has emerged the concept that an emperor's religious policies and beliefs are conceptually separable, together with the provocative, but now widely accepted argument that Constantine

practiced religious toleration, allowing for the continuity of Rome's varied religions.[5]

Drake's contributions derive from his willingness to take seriously Eduard Schwartz's suggestion that long versions of the manuscripts preserving Eusebius' speech "For the Emperor Constantine on the Occasion of his Thirtieth Year" really preserved two addresses, one celebrating the emperor's tricennalia, the other the bishop's speech celebrating the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[6] Drake realized that the sharp change of tone and approach between the two rhetorical pieces offered an unprecedented opportunity to distinguish Constantine's policy, evident in the address to the emperor that the bishop delivered publicly in Constantinople (*LC* 1.1; cf. *VC* 4.46), from Eusebius' own ideas about what the emperor's involvement with the church represented, enunciated before a group of his peers in Jerusalem.[7] Next came the question: Why would the bishop, such an outspoken Christian when celebrating the church's founding, avoid all mention of Christ—speaking instead in guarded and nuanced forms about the *Logos*—when directing his remarks at the emperor himself? With *In Praise of Constantine* (1976), Drake's realization that the bishop had to modulate his tone and speak in more inclusive terms to an emperor whose policy was to embrace pagan monotheists opened a new chapter in the history of Christianity in Late Antiquity.[8]

Sketched from his sensitive decoding of Eusebius' two rhetorical pieces, Drake's portrait of a tolerant Constantine was revolutionary. Since Edward Gibbon, historians had assumed that intolerant zeal was central to Christianity, an assumption not at all diluted by Burckhardt's Machiavellian argument that Constantine merely pretended to support Christianity to increase his power. Both *In Praise of Constantine* and *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (2000) follow N. H. Baynes in accepting the sincerity of Constantine's conversion[9] but show Drake successfully challenging the notion that "true" Christianity was synonymous with intolerance of other religious views. Drake argued that Constantine was reaching out to multiple audiences and trying to build common ground and, indeed, that the difference in the early fourth century between Christianity and elite Hellene monotheism—vigorously practiced in key imperial centers such as Rome and Antioch—might not have been as different as earlier imagined.[10] Drake's work also challenges the notion that Christianity was a monolithic entity in the early fourth century. In particular, Constantine rejected the attitude of Christian "puritans" such as the Novatian Bishop Acesius who refused to recognize as fully Christian many who had lapsed during Diocletian's persecution.

In reaction to the hard-line religious leader, Constantine suggested that he "find a ladder and climb to Heaven alone."[11]

All of these new insights into the complex and varied religious culture of the fourth century derive from a recognition that Roman rhetoric must be taken seriously but that it cannot be read just at face value. Although classicists have long been expert in "decoding" the subtle advice to emperors laced through imperial panegyrics,[12] late ancient religious rhetoric was once the exclusive province of church historians.[13] Often doctrinally committed themselves, these scholars too often read ancient texts as confirming or opposing their own attitudes toward the Christian church.[14] Only with a more interdisciplinary approach to these documents, a perspective integral to the study of Late Antiquity as a period of transition, pioneered by Oxford scholars in the late 1960s, did these rhetorical texts get read as *historical* documents, and consequently analyzed with the same kind of attention to nuance and detail that had characterized the approach to imperial panegyric.[15] The new historical approach to Late Antiquity also drove scholars to situate these rhetorical texts in their broader historical context. This is the context in which Drake took a fresh look at Eusebius' two speeches.

The adroit use of rhetoric to signal political and religious concepts to a knowing audience was, of course, not new in the fourth century. Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern states were equally political and religious entities, and kings in these regions often encouraged their subjects to use rhetoric to underscore the religious foundations of their power and public order. Such ideas evolved into theories of Hellenistic kingship that were in turn adopted by the Romans.[16] By the mid-third century, some emperors stated they had a divine *comes* (or "comrade") who aided them in their elevation and rule.[17] In addition, the supercharged religiosity and the recognition that ties to the divine could undergird the emperor's legitimacy in Late Antiquity gave added weight to such crafted packages of imperial power. This process intensified even as Roman religion itself was evolving (evident in Drake's approach to Constantine) from a spectrum of religious beliefs ranging from traditional polytheism and pagan monotheism, to an increasingly, though never completely homogeneous Christianity. These trends continued unabated even into the seventh century as Muslims occupied the eastern and southern portions of the former Roman Empire, absorbing older traditions and institutions at the same time.[18] By exploring how various late antique authors described these Roman and post-Roman religious and political institutions in order to present a desired image to the broader public, the chapters in this volume not only illustrate the evolving rapport between policy and practice in Late Antiquity but they also sensitize the reader to

ways in which even modern rhetoric can shape our perception of the relationship between religion and the state. In particular, Hal Drake's innovative and nuanced reading of the religious rhetoric of the fourth century across the span of his career has influenced this volume. Mirroring Drake's approach, these chapters by former students and colleagues examine the connections between rhetoric, politics, and religion during Late Antiquity and as part of the late antique legacy to the Mediterranean world.

Part I, "The Image of Political and Episcopal Authority," examines various connections between religion, rhetoric, political, and episcopal authority. Eric Fournier (West Chester University) reevaluates the historical accuracy of Ammianus Marcellinus' description of Julian's *adventus* in Sirmium. In doing so, he pays close attention to the rhetoric of Ammianus in an attempt to discern fact from fiction in his account of events. Robert M. Frakes (Clarion University) sets out a new theory for the cause of the famous riot of Thessalonika in 390 by applying a sensitive reading to the ancient historical sources describing the general Butheric's arrest of a popular charioteer and how the resulting civic unrest led to rioting and the general's death. Michael Blodgett (California State University, Channel Islands) examines Pope Leo's embassy to Attila the Hun, arguing that scholars have underestimated the role that Leo's status as bishop of Rome played in Attila's rhetoric, rationalizing his decision to abandon his Italian campaign. Last, Michael Proulx (North Georgia College & State University) argues that Ambrose carefully crafted the public's perception of him as a close confidant and protector of Valentinian II in the hope that this persona would allow him a role in the administration of Theodosius I. Proulx argues against the current scholarly consensus that has tended to accept Ambrose's account at face value.

The chapters in Part II address the role of Roman tradition in post-Roman late antique societies. Tom Sizgorich (University of California, Irvine) examines how Muslim historians perceived the transformation of the former Roman and Persian empires. Sizgorich argues that early Muslim historians saw their empire not as embodying a dramatic break from the past but as a continuation of these older predecessors. Indeed, this view mirrored the view that Muslims took regarding the relationship between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. In both instances Muslims viewed their place in the narrative of history of the Mediterranean world as the ultimate fulfillment of previous imperial and religious traditions. The second chapter in this section, by Jim Tschen Emmons (Northern Virginian Community College), explores the rhetoric of the desert in sixth-century Ireland. He argues that Irish monks viewed their native

forests and fens in a way analogous to earlier monks' attitudes toward the desert. Just as late antique monks had waged holy battles in the deserts of Syria and Egypt, Irish monks applied these images to their own topography.

Part III examines civic elites in the Byzantine East. In this section's first chapter, Miriam Raub Vivian (California State University, Bakersfield) examines St. Daniel the Stylite. Vivian finds valuable insights regarding late antique society amidst the rhetorical presentation of Daniel as a holy man and miracle worker. A two-part chapter on late antique Gazan philosophers follows. In the first, Frank J. Frost (University of California, Santa Barbara) examines a scene from the *Grande Caccia*, a mosaic in Sicily that depicts the capture of a tiger cub and a griffin, the mythological creature that featured the head of an eagle and body of a lion. Frost notes that the captor's strategy in the mosaic is very similar to Timotheos of Gaza's description of such a capture partially preserved in a fourteenth-century manuscript containing several excerpts of his fifth-century treatise on animals. Frost suggests that this coincidence indicates Timotheos' knowledge of the Sicilian mosaic (whether directly or indirectly) and thus is a rare instance in antiquity where both rhetorical description and artistic subject are extant. In the second chapter, Roberta Mazza (University of Manchester) examines the process of Christianization during the reign of Justinian through the lens of Choricus of Gaza's sixth-century oration commemorating the emperor Justinian's Brumalia. Mazza argues that traditional festivals like the Brumalia were too deeply rooted in the Roman calendar for emperors to eliminate easily. Moreover, she proposes that emperors could use such festivals to reinforce the empire's political hierarchy. Although such holidays were rhetorically Christianized, they remained a vital reinforcement of the relationship between the emperor and elites.

The last section, Part IV ("Addressing Challenges to Sacred Texts and Rites"), contains contributions by three scholars. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser (University of California, Santa Barbara) incorporates and furthers the latest scholarship on Origen of Alexandria, arguing that the boundaries between philosophers and Christians familiar with Hellenic philosophy were very fluid and that Origen was the ultimate symbol of this fluidity. According to DePalma Digeser, the common ground between Origen and the Platonists with whom he studied and communicated was occluded by later third-century rhetoric seeking sharply to distinguish "Christian" and "Hellene" identities. Accordingly, the Platonist philosopher Porphyry characterized Christian doctrine as corrupting Hellenism, while his antagonist, the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, argued that Origen's theology drew on but also transcended

his philosophical education. Next, Heidi Marx-Wolf (University of Manitoba) examines the discourse regarding demons in Origen, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, another late third-century Platonist. Marx-Wolf's analysis of the rhetoric of their daemonological debates suggests that philosophical views of daemons were not sharply distinguished along religious lines. Rather, as DePalma Digeser also suggests, these philosophers drew from a common heritage even as they set out competing totalizing discourses, both Christian and Hellene. Last, Paul M. Sonnino (University of California, Santa Barbara) compares ancient textual criticisms of the Hebrew Bible with the seventeenth-century biblical exegesis of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676). Sonnino argues that ancient scholars were not unaware of contradictions in the biblical canon but that any concerns these caused were overridden by their belief in the "sanctified wisdom" of the ancient texts. In the seventeenth century, however, scholars had much more faith in their own knowledge than that of the ancients and set out to improve upon textual criticisms in a new and revolutionary manner that mirrored the scientific revolution.

Although the chapters in this volume are diverse in terms of topics and chronology, they share a fascination for late antique rhetorical and religious traditions. These conventions are the starting point for examining late antique political, religious, intellectual, and social history. These works also share a touchstone in the legacy of Hal Drake. His leadership, scholarship, and friendship have inspired not only all of the essays in this volume but the lives of their authors as well.

NOTES

1. Eus. *VC* 3.1 and *HE* 10.2. Although, to be fair, Eusebius was, to some extent, following the emperor's own lead. See *OrSC* 22-26.
2. See book 2.
3. J. Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, trans. M. Hadas (Garden City, NY: 1956). Originally published as *Die Zeit Constantins des Grossen* (Basel, 1853).
4. T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), and more succinctly, T. D. Barnes, *The Constantinian Reformation, The Crake Lectures, 1984* (Sackville, New Brunswick: 1986).
5. For the influence of Drake's view of Constantine in contemporary scholarship, see Noel Lenski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, review of Noel Lenski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the*

Age of Constantine (Cambridge, 2005), in *The Classical Bulletin* 84 (1) (2009): 148-150.

6. Eduard Schwartz, "Eusebios," *Pauleys Realenzyclopaedie* 6:1: col. 1428.
7. H. A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' "Tricennial Orations"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 31.
8. The historical errors resulting from taking Constantine's "reformation" for granted are numerous and still hard to spot. For example, it was only recently that Christopher Kelly, "Bureaucracy and Government," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 195-196, argued that Constantine's first task after subduing Licinius in 324 would have been to strive for rapprochement with his former co-regent's supporters, many of whom were elite pagan monotheists. Kelly is one of the first to realize that Constantine's success in the east depended not only on his support for Christians but in his refusal to alienate the population who had supported Licinius.
9. H. A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); see also idem, "Constantine and Consensus," *Church History* 64 (1) (1995): 1-15, and Norman H. Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church*, ed. Henry Chadwick (London, 1972).
10. On the burgeoning subject of pagan monotheism, see G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), and Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede, eds., *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (New York: Oxford, 1999). Rome had been home to Plotinus' school (Porph. *Plot.* 3), and Porphyry continued to teach Plotinus' ideas late into the third century (Eun. *VS*. 456-457); Antioch and Daphne were home to Iamblichus' school early in the fourth century, if not earlier. See E. DePalma Digeser, "The Power of Religious Rituals: A Philosophical Quarrel on the Eve of the Great Persecution," in *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, ed. Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, forthcoming 2009), and idem, "An Oracle of Apollo at Daphne and the Great Persecution," *Classical Philology* 99 (2004): 57-77.
11. Socrates, *Church History* 1:10 (NPNF 2:17f.); Sozomen, *Church History* 1:22 (NPNF 2:256). See further Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*, 269.
12. See, for example, G. A. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, 300 B.C.-A.D. 300* (Princeton, 1972), idem, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (North Carolina, 1980), idem, *Greek Rhetoric under the Christian Emperors* (Princeton, 1983), and R. Seager, "Some Imperial Virtues in the Latin Prose Panegyrics: The Demands of Propaganda and the Dynamics of Literary Composition" *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 4 (1984): 129-165.
13. For a good example of this approach, see K. M. Setton, *Christian Attitude towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century* (New York, 1941).

14. For an excellent discussion of this problem, see Ra'anan S. Boustan and Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Blood and Atonement in the Pseudo-Clementines and *The Story of the Ten Martyrs*: The Problem of Selectivity in the Study of 'Judaism' and 'Christianity,'" *Henoch* 30 (2008): 333-364.
15. The bibliography now is overwhelming. Some recent works include Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50-250* (Oxford, 1996); *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*, ed. Egbert Bakker and Ahuvia Kahane (Harvard, 1997); *Rhetoric and Reality in Early Christianities*, ed. Willi Braun (Waterloo, 2005); Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley, 1991); and *Christian Origins. Theology, Rhetoric, and Community*, edd. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (London and New York, 1998).
16. See E. R. Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," *Yale Classical Studies* 1 (1928): 55-102; J. Farber, "The Cyropaedia and Hellenistic Kingship," *American Journal of Philology* 100 (1979): 497-514.
17. See A. D. Nock, "The Emperor's Divine Comes," *JRS* 37 (1947): 102-116.
18. See Aziz al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan Politics*, chap. 2.

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PART I

THE IMAGE OF POLITICAL AND EPISCOPAL AUTHORITY

1

THE *ADVENTUS* OF JULIAN AT SIRMIUM: THE LITERARY CONSTRUCTION OF HISTORICAL REALITY IN AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS*

Eric Fournier

This chapter analyzes a specific episode from the narrative of Ammianus Marcellinus, the *adventus* of the emperor Julian at Sirmium in 361 during his civil war with Constantius II, in order to examine the use of rhetoric, and its potential consequences, by a historian who has been alternatively labeled an "accurate and faithful guide" to the fourth century and a writer of "imaginative literature."[1] It argues that even if Ammianus does indeed feature a high level of rhetorical elaboration in his presentation of Julian's arrival at Sirmium, this representation should not be considered as fanciful and contrary to the spirit of the event it purports to describe.[2] Ammianus does indeed omit important contextual information regarding the religious backdrop of this event, and especially the opposition to Constantius II that resulted from the emperor's ecclesiastical politics. This can be partly explained by the literary conventions of the genre in which Ammianus was writing.[3] The background against which the *Res Gestae* were written provides the other part of the explanation. Ammianus wrote around 390 CE under the zealous Christian ruler Theodosius, and in the years following Julian's demise in Persia Christian writers spitefully attacked the memory of the emperor they called "Apostate" with a post mortem *damnatio memoriae*.[4] Considering Ammianus' ideological inclinations, it is not surprising that in this context Ammianus would have composed an apology for Julian's reign.[5] It was in Ammianus' interests to pass over any indication that the people of Sirmium had something to gain from

welcoming him the way they did. Admitting this would lessen Julian's role in the matter, and so would diminish his prestige.[6]

The apologetical nature of the *Res Gestae* also explains the parallels between Ammianus' narrative of Julian's *adventus* and a panegyrical description of the same event. In short, Ammianus exaggerated, probably invented certain details in order to magnify Julian's role in the event, and framed the arrival of his hero in the traditional gaze of a triumphal ceremony as a way to express the legitimacy of the "semi-usurper."[7] In the larger context that Ammianus himself and other sources present, the details that Ammianus omitted in his description of the *adventus* do not make his version impossible. The people of Sirmium were very likely to have welcomed Julian positively in hope of a change for the better. Whether they welcomed Julian with a formal *adventus* is impossible to know, and ultimately it is of very little importance. What matters is Ammianus' choice to describe the event as an *adventus*, because it conveyed the important message that Julian was a legitimate ruler. And because the *adventus* was a traditional Roman ceremony with strong "pagan" connotations, Ammianus' literary decision was also an ideological choice that suited both Julian's and Ammianus' view of the world.[8] In this way, Ammianus' description of Julian's arrival at Sirmium is consciously polemical and potentially oriented against the transformations of Roman society that had been occurring on a rapid scale since Constantine.[9]

The analysis of this passage, however, shows that Ammianus' main purpose, to present Julian as a legitimate Augustus instead of the "semi-usurper" that he was, follows Julian's own account expressed in his *Letter to the Athenians*.[10] In this letter, written in 361,[11] Julian "intended to demonstrate that he, the usurper, was in fact the legitimate ruler, whereas his cousin, the Augustus, was a criminal," in the concise formula of Susanna Elm.[12] This is exactly the same message that Ammianus depicted in book 21 until the *adventus* of Sirmium, albeit in a more subtle way. This parallel adds yet another element to support the view that Ammianus had "deeply assimilated" Julian's writings and that even though direct borrowings are difficult to detect Julian clearly had a fundamental influence over Ammianus.[13]

While knowledge of this influence might seem to contradict the argument that Ammianus' rhetoric did not affect his depiction of Julian's arrival in Sirmium, in fact it provides the opportunity to express an important clarification. It is the contention of this chapter that there are enough indications to support the gist of Ammianus' description of Julian's arrival in Sirmium. Ammianus' rhetoric, however, has the effect of presenting a specific *interpretation* as an objective representation of the event, an interpretation that follows Julian's own view of his career and

struggle against Constantius as expressed in the *Letter to the Athenians*. This important distinction leads to the unsurprising insight that while Ammianus cannot be accused of "factual" misrepresentation, he also presents a global interpretation of the period he writes about in which these facts play a supporting role.[14] Modern readers need to be reminded of this basic characteristic common to all historical narratives in order to eliminate the widespread practice that consists of extracting passages from their context for specific purposes and without any attempt to understand how the particular fits into the whole.[15]

Ammianus' description of the Sirmium episode can be summarized as follows: Julian, as Caesar of Constantius II, spent the winter of 359/360 in Paris (20.1)[16] roughly at the same time as Constantius was preparing for a campaign on the eastern front against the Persian King Sapor II. The Augustus demanded reinforcements from his Caesar, ordering Julian to send his best troops eastward. When news of this order reached Julian's camp, the troops mutinied and declared Julian emperor (20.4). Negotiations ensued, during which Julian offered to share power with Constantius (20.8). But in the face of the latter's refusal to divide his authority, civil war seemed inevitable (20.9). In the spring of 361 Julian went on the offensive, split his forces in three groups with orders to meet at Sirmium, the first city of importance under Constantius' control (21.5). The bulk of Julian's army traveled by land, while Julian himself, heading a small striking force, embarked on a naval expedition down the Danube. Julian left Rauracum to cross the Rhine and followed the Danube on land until he found enough boats to embark his men. Once on the Danube, Julian avoided cities so as not to attract attention, and he hurried as much as possible in order to take his opponents by surprise. The boats of the new Augustus landed at Bononia, roughly twenty miles from Sirmium, on a dark night. Julian sent a small group of men with orders to seize Lucillianus, the *magister equitum per Illyricum*, and to bring him by force if necessary (21.8-9). The mission having succeeded, Julian proceeded to Sirmium the next morning, to be welcomed by the soldiers and *populus* of the city in a formal *adventus* ceremony. Julian stayed at the imperial palace, offered races the following day, and left on the third morning. He hastened to fortify the pass of Succi, before returning to Naissus where he decided to spend the following winter (21.10). There, Julian took numerous decisions of government and received the news that the two legions he had found at Sirmium, which he had ordered to be transferred to Gaul, had revolted at Aquileia (21.11).[17]

Scholarship is scarce on the *adventus* of Julian at Sirmium, which conventional narratives of Julian's reign typically mention without much discussion.[18] Exceptions include Szidat and Nixon, who debated the

chronology of the event.[19] Otherwise, scholars' views on the Sirmium ceremony can be divided into two main groups. On the one hand, an impressive roster accepts Ammianus' narrative at face value.[20] Some scholars even went as far as quoting the actual words reported by Ammianus (21.9.8) on the occasion of Lucillianus' meeting with Julian without any indication to the effect that these words should not be taken as having actually been pronounced.[21] On the other hand, more recent work has tended to raise doubts about Ammianus' narrative in some way or another. David Hunt characterizes Ammianus' description of Julian's arrival in Sirmium as "merely the veneer of a more insecure reality."[22] Hunt was well aware of Sirmium's situation in the years immediately prior to Julian's arrival.[23] Pierre Renucci, in a recent book on Julian's government and political ideas, is also critical of Ammianus' text.[24] But Renucci's account is unfortunately characterized by a pervasive pro-Julian view of events.[25]

Clifford Ando recently questioned the alleged spontaneous nature of the welcome given to Julian by the people of Sirmium, a version of events he characterized as part of "Julian's campaign of disinformation."[26] In order to explain the *adventus* as described by Ammianus, therefore, Ando postulated that during the negotiation period following Julian's proclamation in Paris, the two men in charge of carrying Julian's letters to Constantius—Pentadius, *magister officiorum*, and Eutherius, *praepositus sacri cubiculi*—would have publicly read Julian's letters aloud in the cities they visited on their way to court in order to prepare the arrival of the new Augustus.[27] There are two main objections to Ando's hypothesis. First, it is hard to imagine how Eutherius could have succeeded in this mission alongside Pentadius who, as Ando himself noted, remained faithful to Constantius to the end.[28] Second, and more problematic, is the search for a plausible explanation to justify Ammianus' version of events. This search in itself implies a use of Ammianus' narrative as an accurate report of the event. While Ando does take a step in the direction of a more critical reading of Ammianus by questioning the spontaneous nature of the event, his skepticism is exclusively oriented toward Julian, who is deemed responsible for Ammianus' version of events. By contrast, Ammianus' narrative is accepted at face value. In short, despite the numerous problems involved with Ammianus' version, scholars have tended to accept it without much criticism.

From Gibbon to Matthews, the author of the *Res Gestae* has usually been praised for his accuracy, his objectivity, and his moderation.[29] The way Ammianus balances his portrait of rulers, especially his criticism of Julian and his funerary *elogium* of Constantius, has impressed numerous scholars, who gave great weight to the assertions of this *protector*

domesticus.[30] Following the lead of Ensslin, Thompson, Rosen, and Blockley, more recent scholarship has moved to the other extreme, emphasizing how Ammianus would fail the test of the objective "representation of historical reality."[31] But as reviewers of Barnes' study stressed, such analyses of Ammianus' text are based on the idealistic and fanciful *a priori* that there is a unique reality to report, a single accurate and correct version of events.[32] Historians more attuned to other disciplines, and especially literary criticism, have exposed the flaws of such positions for several decades.[33] Thus, it seems that scholarship on Ammianus will be better served by focusing instead on the apparently diverse and contradictory elements of his narrative without a view to determine whether its author should be categorized as trustworthy or not. As Cameron concluded, we are in need of a "reassessment of Ammianus as a great writer in spite of, or even because of" his biases, his omissions, and his rhetoric.[34] It is my hope that the following analysis of Julian's *adventus* at Sirmium will bring a modest contribution to an evolving reinterpretation of Ammianus as a writer.

But why should we be skeptical of Ammianus' narrative? First, the obvious literary elaboration of his text makes it suspicious as a faithful report of the events it claims to present accurately.[35] Strangely enough, Ammianus himself seems to have been aware of the problems involved with the writing of a history that described the deeds of an emperor he considered a hero. At the beginning of book 16, as he is about to narrate Julian's exploits in Gaul, Ammianus thus warns the reader: "Whatever I shall tell (and no wordy deceit adorns my tale, but untrammeled faithfulness to fact, based upon clear proofs, composes it) will constitute material on which panegyric could be based. For some law of a higher life seems to have attended this youth from his noble cradle even to his last breath."[36] This last sentence is programmatic of Ammianus' view that Julian benefited from divine protection, which will be repeated throughout book 21.

The first sentence seems at first sight contradictory, since on the one hand Ammianus concedes that he will write *almost* a panegyric of Julian, while on the other hand he reassures his reader that despite this tendency, he will avoid rhetoric (*falsitas arguta*) and will stick to the truth of the facts. Most likely, the profession of truth belongs to the conventions of the historical genre.[37] And undoubtedly the admission that the Julian narrative will verge on the panegyric should be taken seriously. For Fontaine, it should be taken as an indication of the apologetical character of Ammianus' work against Christian writers and also of the conscious decision that its author took in crafting a portrait of Julian that escaped the extremes of Libanius and Mamertinus. More trustworthy than the

idealistic professions of truth, Fontaine adds, Ammianus' own admission authorizes a critical reading of his narrative.[38] Following this cue, the next section presents a critical reading of Ammianus' book 21 up until the event under scrutiny (21.10).

Attention to the structure and main themes of book 21 leading to the *adventus* reveals that Ammianus carefully set the stage for this event, which Ammianus not only presents as the first significant step in the consummation of Julian's rise to power but also as an important omen for the rest of the campaign against Constantius (21.10.2). The omnipresence of omens is designed to convince the reader of Julian's divine status, or at least of the protection he enjoyed from the gods, as Ammianus already declared in book 16.[39]

The beginning of book 21 is carefully crafted as a comparison, an antithesis between Constantius and Julian.[40] Indeed, the very first words directly contrast Constantius' incapacity to take Bezabde with Julian's activities in Gaul.[41] This is achieved by manipulating the chronology, since the end of book 20 had already mentioned that Constantius was to leave Bezabde to winter in Antioch.[42] Ammianus then prepares the reader to anticipate the positive outcome for his hero by introducing omens that announce to Julian the impending death of Constantius.[43] This achieves two ends. It presents Julian as the recipient of divine insight and therefore as protected by the gods. It also presents Julian in control of the situation since he already knows the outcome of the adventure he is about to begin. The omens announcing Constantius' death to Julian therefore insinuate that Julian's plan of invasion against Constantius is a guaranteed success, hiding the tremendous uncertainty that must have loomed over the usurper's campaign eastward.[44]

In the following section Ammianus launches an apology to justify the serious character of foretelling techniques. This apology is directly related to Julian's capability of foretelling the future and it anticipates criticism against this "pagan" belief. By the same token, it reveals the importance of these omens for the ensuing narrative and reinforces the power of the portent announcing Constantius' imminent death to Julian. [45] Additionally, before the end of this short digression, Ammianus cleverly introduces a quotation of Cicero that answers the potential criticism that the outcome is not always the one announced by the portent: "Signs that announce the future are indicated by the gods. If one mistakes it, it is not the divine nature that is at fault, but the human conjecture."[46] Not only does the mention of Cicero express a particular ideology regarding the religious aspect of such events,[47] it also prepares the reader for another contrast to come between Julian's competent handling of presages and Constantius' incapacity to read similar signs. Indeed, at 21.2 Ammianus presents a first

omen showing Julian in control of the situation, followed by a specter that foretells Constantius' death to Julian in a dream (21.2.1-2).

The next section (21.3) introduces Vadomarius, a barbarian ruler enrolled by Constantius to attack the frontier zone of the Raetias in order to keep Julian busy and prevent him from leaving his territory while Constantius fought the Persians.[48] Ammianus presents Vadomarius as a traitor to Julian because he had previously exchanged letters with the western ruler and was now spying on Julian for Constantius.[49] The words quoted by Ammianus to illustrate Vadomarius' treacherous behavior reveal the historian's outlook on Julian's rebellion. Ammianus specifies that Vadomarius had called Julian "dominum Augustum . . . et deum" before writing to Constantius "Your Caesar is undisciplined."[50] Clearly, for one reason or another, Vadomarius had at some point deemed it necessary to address Julian according to the imperial protocol, thereby accepting his claim as Augustus. The tale of Vadomarius accomplishes two purposes. The depiction of Constantius using barbarians to spy on Julian and inciting them to attack Roman territory to protect the emperor's own safety vilifies Constantius.[51] It also blurs the reality of Julian's usurpation, insinuating that Vadomarius—clearly a villain in this case—shared the view of the main villain—Constantius—on Julian's status. For Ammianus, Julian is an Augustus from the time of the proclamation of Paris. The military proclamation conferred legitimacy on the western ruler, whether Constantius liked it or not. And so this tale warns the reader that it is inappropriate to depict Julian as a mere Caesar.[52] In fact, because the gods have decreed so, Constantius' behavior illustrates his own incomprehensibility of divine matters.

The capture of Vadomarius is itself presented as a good omen before Julian's departure for the east (21.4.7)—a good omen that is immediately fulfilled by Julian's sneak-attack against the barbarians across the Rhine (21.4.8). Again, Ammianus introduces an important aspect of Julian's campaign against Constantius, for this episode announces the speed with which he will depict the usurper on his way to Sirmium.[53] This is expressed clearly immediately afterward, as Ammianus shows Julian pondering over the potential catastrophe of a civil war (*intestinae cladis*). Ammianus' hero foretells with lucidity, however, that nothing suits a sudden enterprise better than speed (21.5.1). The mention of *intestinae cladis* could remind the reader of Julian's status, and so Ammianus comes back to the theme of legitimacy by depicting Julian as giving a speech to his soldiers.[54] Quite implausibly, Ammianus shows Julian presenting his plan of attack to his soldiers for ratification.[55] This is perhaps another contrast, in order to show Julian as a good general, respectful of his men, whereas he typically depicts Constantius as a victim of palace intrigues,

factions, a puppet of his favorites who often engineers the downfall of powerful generals.[56] Ammianus insists that the soldiers acclaimed Julian's speech as an oracle, adding yet another proof that Julian's reign had been divinely decreed.[57] As scholars have already noticed, Ammianus' closest resemblance to Tacitus is his art of insinuation.[58] After Ammianus noted in numerous passages that divine decrees had sealed Julian's fate, in this specific instance he reminds his reader of the uncertainties of the outcome. As Julian orders his soldiers to walk toward the Pannonias, Ammianus adds that Julian "foolhardily entrusted himself to an uncertain fortune."[59] Embedded in a narrative dominated by insinuations of an opposite viewpoint, this sentence—probably the most accurate in book 21—both preserves the suspense of the story by reasserting an uncertain outcome and balances the impression that the dice are cast. In this sense it is similar to Ammianus' criticisms of Julian, which balanced his overwhelmingly positive presentation. Without it, Ammianus would be writing a panegyric. With it, he is sustaining his claim to the truth. As Sabbah suggested, Ammianus seems to follow Lucian, who argued that historians could include panegyrical elements in their narrative, as long as they were rightly motivated and balanced by some criticism.[60]

Ammianus pursues the contrasts between Julian and Constantius at 21.6, once again manipulating the chronology in order to explicitly parallel Julian's activities in Gaul with Constantius' wintering at Antioch (21.6.1). At this juncture Ammianus hammers home his point on the importance of omens and includes a tale that illustrates perfectly the veracity of Cicero's quote on human propensity to be mistaken in the interpretation of divine signs. At Antioch a group of courtiers suspects a former tribune of treason and wishes for Constantius to have him executed. "More indulgent than usual," Ammianus maliciously notes, the emperor answers that the man should be left alone, even though he thinks him guilty. "If he did commit such a fault," Constantius would have said, "he will be punished under my gaze by the verdict of his own conscience."[61] At the circus on the following day, coincidentally, the same individual died in front of the emperor. "Constantius rejoiced—*he too*—to possess the gift of prescience," underlines Ammianus.[62]

The historian emphasizes the contrast with the "quoque" but he also applies Cicero's wisdom by depicting Julian receiving authoritative divine signs of Constantius' imminent death while Constantius himself thinks he has similar gifts. In fact, Ammianus specifies that the alleged traitor's death had been caused by the collapse of one of the ramps in the circus.[63] In this case, the explanation of the cause of death is important because it discredits Constantius' claim of being equally able to predict the future.

Further, while Julian had already decided on an aggressive course of action and left for Sirmium, Ammianus shows Constantius as deeply hesitant about what to do next.[64] Constantius eventually decides to attend the eastern front first, before crossing Illyricum and Italy in order to capture his rebellious Caesar in Gaul.[65] Implicitly, Ammianus depicts Constantius as convinced that Julian will stay in Gaul like Magnentius ten years earlier. We will never know if this was true, but it has the effect of amplifying Julian's speed, in contrast to Constantius who thinks he has lots of time on his hands while in reality (that of Ammianus' narrative, at least) he is wasting time. It prepares the reader to accept the incredible tale Ammianus will soon tell of Julian's arrival at Bononia. The contrast is further heightened when Constantius receives reports that Sapor is at the head of his troops ready to attack in the East, but nobody seems to know where this attack is to take place.[66] The situation is the absolute reverse of Julian's successful sneak-attack on the barbarians across the Rhine on his departure from Rauracum (21.4.7-8). Constantius is not only slow and passive, but he also does not seem to know his enemy's position; whereas Julian takes charge with great speed, knows exactly where to strike, and does so successfully.

The reader thus prepared for the confrontation between the great hero and the incompetent villain, Ammianus adds further panegyrical elements to his depiction of Julian before his narration of the *adventus*. In order to hide the small size of his army, Julian divides his troops in three groups. This is the occasion for Ammianus to use the *exemplum* of Alexander the Great in order to depict Julian as a military strategist of great genius.[67] Once arrived where they could navigate the Danube, Julian and his men would have found some boats that Fortuna had put there for them, Ammianus would have us believe, to reinforce the already prevalent conception of Julian as protected by the gods.[68] Additionally, if Kelly is right in his interpretation of Ammianus' use of a ship to represent the state in another context, this passage could perhaps represent Ammianus' belief that Julian was a legitimate emperor.[69] Fortuna's preparation of boats for Julian would thus suggest that the outcome of this event—Julian's successful takeover—was Julian's destiny. And if Julian managed to avoid attracting attention on the river, it was because he imitated the great *exemplum* of Cyrus the elder, who was very frugal and did not ask for elaborate meals from his hosts (21.9.2).

The narration of Julian's navigation on the Danube, and of the *adventus* itself, is the occasion for Ammianus to make specific use of Mamertinus' panegyric.[70] Mamertinus actually accompanied Julian and insisted that as an eyewitness (*uidimus*) his assertions should be taken seriously.[71] Still, Mamertinus depicts Julian's descent along the Danube more as an epic

hero than as a rebellious emperor on the verge of a civil war.[72] Ammianus exhibits telling parallels with Mamertinus. He characterizes Julian's navigation on the Danube by its rapidity, which is common to Mamertinus and a topos of imperial panegyrics.[73] He introduces epic themes when he alludes to *fama* in Virgilian terms.[74] He compares Julian to Triptolemus, just as in Mamertinus' panegyric.[75] It is not a novelty to note that Ammianus' description of the Sirmium *adventus* fits perfectly the description of such ceremonies in the panegyrics: Julian was welcomed by "a crowd of soldiers and people of all sorts, with many lights, flowers, and good wishes, [and they] escorted him to the palace, hailing him as Augustus and Lord."[76]

The key passage revealing the significance of this event in Ammianus' work is, I suggest, the one that immediately follows this panegyrical description: "Joyful by the favorable omen of this happy occasion, strengthened in the hope that from now on, following the example of such a populous and frequented metropolis, he would also be welcomed as a salutary star, the next day he gave chariot races to the great joy of the people" (21.10.2). This passage is, in many ways, the culmination of Ammianus' careful setting of the stage for Julian's campaign to reach supreme power. First, the arrival at Sirmium is the only detail Ammianus gives on the reaction of people living in Constantius' part of the empire to Julian's usurpation. After Sirmium, Julian awaits in Naissus, where he receives the news of Constantius' death—in many ways an anticlimax to the expected confrontation (21.12.3). Second, in addition to the spontaneous nature of the *adventus* ceremony itself, designed to express the people's allegiance to the new ruler (especially significant are the hailing of "Augustus" and "Lord," in this context), Ammianus adds that the people of Sirmium received him as a "salutary star" (21.10.2: *sidus salutare*). This staple of panegyrical literature also expresses that the people of the Illyrian metropolis were relieved to see Julian arrive in their city before Constantius did.[77] Beyond the rhetorical language, one can read an insinuation that the people of Sirmium had good reasons to welcome a change of government, which implicitly means that they had good reasons to dislike the old régime of Constantius.[78] The contrast between the two princes throughout book 21 has prepared the ground for this insinuation and makes the exaggeration more acceptable to the reader.

The prevalence of omens, a fundamental feature of book 21, is also notable in this passage. Ammianus emphasizes Julian's hope that the positive welcome of the people of Sirmium will prove to be a good omen for the events to come. Julian knows of Constantius' imminent death, and perhaps even the exact date.[79] But in the meantime, Julian needs all the support he can muster. And this is why the Sirmium *adventus* is so

important. As the first city that Julian invaded in Constantius' territory, Ammianus presents its positive reaction as the popular consent to the coup of Paris.[80] Julian's hope that this proves to be a good omen suggests that there will be more similar positive welcome in the near future. Ammianus' apology of foretelling techniques immediately comes to mind, coupled with Julian's special status as favorite of the gods, to announce the positive outcome of the enterprise for Julian. The sponsoring of chariot races, another staple of panegyrical *adventus*, reinforces the theme of divine connection expressed through foretelling of future events, an important constituent of Julian's legitimacy. While the races honored the city, Julian's sponsorship was also a sign of his sovereignty over its inhabitants—another way for Ammianus to depict Julian as a legitimate Augustus and by the same token to blur the reality of what Julian really was: a rebellious Caesar invading the territory of his Augustus.[81]

In addition to this elaborate literary construction of the *adventus* episode—embedded within the matrix of book 21 as the inevitable success of the legitimate Augustus the gods protect against the doomed Constantius—Ammianus is also guilty of omissions and contradictions. The second part of this chapter analyzes the historical context of the event in order to determine whether the Sirmians had good reasons to welcome Julian the way (Ammianus wants us to believe) they did. The aim of this inquiry is not only to determine whether "the homage which Julian obtained," in the words of Gibbon, had been motivated "from the fears or the inclination of the people" but also if there were good reasons for Ammianus to exaggerate this "homage" right from the start.[82] For internal evidence from Ammianus' narrative indicates that the context of Julian's arrival in the city was not as straightforward as the historian would have us believe.

According to Ammianus' presentation of Julian's arrival at Sirmium, the Augustus was received "by a heterogeneous crowd of soldiers and people of all sorts" (21.20.1: militaris et omnis generis turba). What crowd of soldiers is Ammianus designating here? Most likely, "militaris" refers to the soldiers that Ammianus mentions later when Julian is in Naissus. In a regression revealing his deliberate avoidance of any precision regarding the soldiers of Sirmium, Ammianus writes that "an unforeseen and fearful message was brought" to Julian: "Two of Constantius' legions, which with one cohort of mounted archers he had found at Sirmium, doubting their loyalty he had sent to Gaul," on their way had revolted and seized Aquileia in the name of Constantius (21.11.1-2). Are these the soldiers under Lucillianus' command who were surprised in the middle of the night by Dagalaifus through an undisclosed stratagem? Or were there two additional legions stationed in or around the city that welcomed Julian

during his *adventus*? If so, are they the same soldiers who participated in Julian's welcome? No precision seems possible here, and the ambiguity is probably intentional. No matter where these units came from, the important point in this case is that Julian did not trust them, despite the presence of soldiers in his alleged triumphal welcome in the city, and they remained faithful to Constantius. So at least some soldiers would perhaps have had no reason to cheer the way Ammianus describes them when Julian arrived in Sirmium.[83]

It is difficult to assess clearly to which side the allegiance of the people of Sirmium belonged. Ammianus' narrative gives the impression that Constantius should have a strong support base in this city. Not the least because Constantius was perhaps born in Sirmium.[84] The emperor also resided there for most of the 350s and continually from 357 to 359. Constantius used the city as a base to organize military campaigns against the Sarmatians and the Quadi who were threatening the Pannonias.[85] He repaired the road linking Atrans with the confluence of the Save river in 356.[86] And his soldiers proclaimed him invincible and "Sarmaticus" for the second time in 358, before he returned to Sirmium for the winter "like a conqueror."[87] So Constantius celebrated at least one triumph in Sirmium, which implies games offered by the emperor to the people of the city. Moreover, Ammianus praises Anatolius, Constantius' praetorian prefect of Illyricum, for his administration, his relief of "the great cost of the imperial post," and especially his alleviation of the income tax (19.11.2-3). From the positive impact of Constantius' presence in the city, we should expect a certain attachment or sympathy from the people of Sirmium to the side of the eastern ruler.[88] Constantius' military activities on the Danube shortly before Julian's usurpation also provide a clear explanation for the fidelity of the Illyrian soldiers to Constantius. Perhaps Julian had succeeded in surprising them by his *Blitzkrieg* on the Danube, but he was not easily going to sway the allegiance built by years of successful campaigns and the accompanying benefits (19.11.2).

Conversely, Ammianus' narrative also includes some indication of opposition to Constantius in Sirmium, which could have led some people to welcome Julian with open arms. One of those indications is the "banquet of Africanus," during which the participants would have voiced their dislike of the regime.[89] The dinner would have taken place in 355. On this basis, Mirkovič concludes that before Julian's proclamation Constantius was not popular in the city of Sirmium and that a form of opposition existed against the emperor.[90]

Was this still true after Constantius eliminated those who took part in this treacherous dinner? Most likely, the emperor's harsh reaction provoked more acute criticism, and it is possible to imagine that it could

have triggered a movement of opposition to the emperor. The conspicuous rhetorical aspects of Ammianus' description could lead us to doubt the authenticity of the event it purports to describe. But because Julian himself knew about this episode Ammianus' statement is unimpeachable.[91] This parallel between Ammianus and Julian's *Letter to the Athenians* highlights an important point: Julian himself knew that, at least in some circles, opposition to Constantius existed in Sirmium. This could explain why he specifically picked that city for a surprise attack in Constantius' territory.

Additionally, despite the attachment of the Illyrian legions that we can deduce from his campaigns in Illyricum, Constantius was not a very successful general. He suffered numerous losses on the eastern front, the most famous being the siege of Amida immortalized by Ammianus' famous description (19.2-8). Constantius also escaped a deadly meeting with the Sarmatian Limigantes at Acimincum, on the Danube north-east from Sirmium, where the imperial throne and its golden cushion were snatched away.[92] Such events, perhaps inconsequential for the soldiers who avenged the deed by slaughtering the barbarians—that might even have strengthened their attachment to the emperor—could have had a very different meaning for those already opposed to Constantius' government. The historian Aurelius Victor and the future emperor Valentinian provide two examples of such people.

Shortly before Julian's arrival at Sirmium, Aurelius Victor had published a *Breviarium* of Roman history from Augustus to Constantius which ended in a manner that could have only been pleasing to Julian. Indeed, despite the unavoidable panegyrical eulogy of the current ruler, the last lines of the text are sharply critical of Constantius' "neglect of all the best sort of men," as well as his poor choice of officials, governors, and commanders.[93] Julian had met Victor in Sirmium, summoned him to Naissus in order to give him the government of the province of Pannonia Secunda, and even paid him the distinguished honor of a bronze statue in Trajan's forum.[94] This has been adduced as the reason behind Victor's promotion by Julian.[95] Dufraigne even suggested that Victor might have played a role in the welcome organized by the city.[96] Whatever the case, it seems that Victor could have been part of those discontented with Constantius' reign, as evidenced by both his criticism of the emperor's men and his eventual acceptance of a post in Julian's administration. Obviously, this is conjectural and not a strong indication of opposition to Constantius. It nevertheless attests to a situation that was not as definite as Ammianus would want us to believe.

The young Valentinian provides yet another—albeit even more uncertain—example of a potential malcontent waiting for an occasion to

take an active role against Constantius' government. Indeed, Valentinian had been discharged from the army by Constantius in 357 (16.11.1-7) and probably lived in retirement at or around Sirmium until 363 (25.10.6-9).[97] This is inferred from the birth of Valentinian's son Gratian, another future emperor, in Sirmium in 359.[98] That Valentinian had been victim of an injustice, "caught in a power struggle between Julian and [Constantius' military commander] Barbatio" in the midst of military operations in Gaul might have incited him to welcome the arrival of Julian as a change for the better.[99] If this is correct, his extended connections among the powerful men of the area would have been extremely beneficial to Julian.[100] In this case we would have one more example of an opponent to Constantius ready to welcome a change with open arms. The example of Valentinian is also particularly interesting because he is a soldier, but also because the extent of his contacts in the area makes it likely that if he did support Julian's arrival he could have swayed the allegiance of other powerful locals.

A fundamental element to take into account when evaluating the support Julian received at Sirmium is religion.[101] It is a well-recognized fact, however, that the literary conventions of the historical genre which Ammianus attempted to emulate, traditional Roman historiography, dictated a disregard of ecclesiastical politics.[102] From one of Ammianus' exceptions to his rule of avoiding Christian matters, scholars have recognized that religious circumstances mattered in Julian's campaign against Constantius. In this important passage, the historian writes that Julian, even though already a committed devotee of the gods in private, "pretended to adhere to the Christian cult *in order to win the favor of all men and have opposition from none*."[103] From this Bowersock safely writes that "Julian was aiming at the broadest possible support for his usurpation."[104] Barnes and Brennecke took it as a cue to go further than Ammianus' narrative and argued that Julian took advantage of Constantius' religious opponents in the west to build a basis of political support for his upcoming struggle with Constantius.[105] This argument provides a good starting point, but it is possible to go further by looking at the situation of Sirmium, and Illyricum more broadly, during the years prior to Julian's usurpation.

The importance of Illyricum in ecclesiastical politics during the 350s is well known. With the court mainly residing in Sirmium from 351 to 359, an "Illyrian trio" of bishops, Ursacius of Singidunum, Valens of Mursa, and Germinius of Sirmium, became highly influential.[106] So much so that scholars usually describe them as Constantius' "court bishops."[107] The emperor was a notorious Homoian, although wavering at times, and he tried to impose his religious beliefs on the empire following the

elimination of Magnentius in 353 when he became the sole ruler of the empire.[108] More important, the first step in Constantius' policy of religious reunification occurred at Sirmium, in 351, when the bishops composed a synodical letter that was instrumental in Constantius' reunification process.[109] This process was carried along at the councils of Arles in 353, of Milan in 355, and back again at Sirmium on three separate occasions between 357 and 359.[110] At each of these councils, the so-called "Illyrian trio" was instrumental in enforcing Constantius' ecclesiastical policy; so much so that when Liberius of Rome attempted to obtain his return from exile, he addressed his letter not to the emperor but to Valens, Ursacius, and Germinius.[111]

In this context, we could logically expect the people of Sirmium to have been on Constantius' side against Julian in 361. And this would provide a good reason to accuse Ammianus of exaggeration in his depiction of Julian's *adventus*. There are, however, some indications to the contrary. First, the council of 351 deposed Photinus of Sirmium with full support from the emperor.[112] Congregations tend to get attached to their bishops, and Photinus' case is no exception. Hilary of Poitiers writes that, following a council that deposed him in 347 or 348, Photinus "could not, even then, be removed, because of a popular faction."[113] Indeed, the opposition of two main groups, pro-Nicene Christians as well as the partisans of Photinus, apparently plagued the reign of his successor Germinius.[114] In this case, Nicene troublemakers included Eusebius of Vercelli and Hilary of Poitiers, who apparently propagated their doctrine among Germinius' flock, if we can believe the testimony of the *Altercatio Heracliani*—a text edited by a Nicene intending to present Germinius' opponents as Nicene martyrs.[115] While Eusebius' sojourn in Sirmium took place after 362, Hilary was back in the West by 360.[116] Thus it is most likely on his trip back from exile that he stopped at Sirmium and attempted to strengthen the Nicene cause against Germinius. Similarly, Sozomen writes that the council of Constantinople (360) accused Basil of Ancyra of having excited the clergy of Sirmium against Germinius.[117]

Admittedly, the *Altercatio Heracliani* would support the potential counter-argument that Germinius had strong support among the population of Sirmium, for it shows the congregation urging the death of the laymen who dared to oppose their bishop.[118] But the clear motivation of the Nicene editor to present the Nicene laymen as martyrs for their faith damages this testimony to the point that the hostility of the crowd it depicts becomes highly suspicious. Despite the impression that we can only perceive the tip of the iceberg when looking at the religious situation of Sirmium in these years, it nevertheless seems clear enough that Germinius' position was not unchallenged. Most important, we can

surmise that from those presenting these challenges Julian could expect, if not a positive welcome, at least some support in hope of a change for the better.

Photinus' partisans would undoubtedly have had good reason to cheer. For it was customary for a new ruler to recall those banished under the previous regime. And Julian did just that.[119] Less securely attested (but no less intriguing) circumstances add to this picture of likely support from the religious opponents of Germinius. While scholars traditionally date Julian's recall of the bishops exiled under Constantius to the months following Constantius' death, Barnes recently argued in favor of an earlier dating. Building upon Brennecke's view that Julian sought support from Nicene circles in the West—a view supported by Ammianus, as seen above—Barnes argues that Julian's recall of the exiled bishops should be situated in the context of his usurpation, around the time of his arrival in Sirmium.[120] If Barnes is right, what we otherwise know of Germinius' career during this period takes a very intriguing meaning and points toward great uncertainty for the bishopric of Sirmium around the time of Julian's arrival.

First, the council that met in Paris in the summer of 360, authorized by Julian, and at which Hilary participated, did not condemn Germinius despite the anathema declared on Ursacius, Valens, and a host of other Homoian bishops.[121] In fact Germinius disappears from the historical records for precisely the years of Julian's reign (360-363).[122] And apparently Germinius took the opportunity provided by Constantius' losing his grip on ecclesiastical politics to dissociate himself from Ursacius and Valens, the two other members of the trio.[123] For Williams, Germinius was not different from other bishops during Constantius' reign and "was under the same kind of imperial pressure for theological uniformity" as other bishops.[124] Ursacius and Valens eventually wrote letters to Germinius requesting him to justify his theological position.[125] This was after Julian's death and beyond the context of his arrival in Sirmium. Nevertheless, it is an important indication that even the bishop of Sirmium, who should have been expected to be on Constantius' side in 361, might have had some reason not to be unhappy with the turn of events.

This chapter has focused on the use of rhetoric and its consequences in the work of the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, using the example of Julian's *adventus* in Sirmium as a case study. So what? This is a question Hal Drake would undoubtedly ask as one of his favorite ways to encourage students to highlight the significance of their argument. This study of the literary construction of the Sirmium episode shows that one of Ammianus' main purposes in his narrative about Julian was to defend the

memory of the short-lived emperor. Ammianus especially wished to present Julian as a favorite of the gods and as a legitimate Augustus. In order to support this contention, Ammianus carefully crafted the arrival of Julian in Sirmium as a formal *adventus* according to the literary conventions *de mise* for such events. In doing so, the historian also revealed that Julian's own conception of his career had been a strong influence on his view of events. A brief examination of the larger context, especially the religious background, in which the Sirmium event took place revealed a much more complex situation than Ammianus presents. But this finding has to be carefully weighed against the consideration that Ammianus was writing in a later context with specific constraints and especially within a particular literary genre in which the Christian reality did not have a place.

More generally, it seems that Ammianus' narrative has suffered from the polarized view of scholars who either deem it reliable or untrustworthy. Such global interpretations have tended to direct more specific inquiries to support one side or the other. Similarly, it seems that *rhetoric* is a blanket term used by historians to dismiss writers or passages of their work as deceptive and unreliable and that serious studies analyzing the use and effects of such writing techniques on the sources historians use are lacking. The present chapter, in an attempt to initiate a corrective to this situation, has argued that the impact of Ammianus' rhetoric was mainly seen in the historian's attempt to convince the reader of a specific interpretation of events. On the one hand, rhetorical elements borrowed from panegyrics, typical of *adventus* descriptions, belong to the literary genre of the *Res Gestae*. But conveniently, on the other hand, these elements also support a specific view of events. In other words, literary conventions explain the presence of exaggeration in the description of Julian's arrival. In itself, this is understandable and innocent. It is less acceptable, however, when it plays a role in presenting Julian in a specific light, a shading that numerous contemporaries would have found objectionable.

Faced with this paradox, it is still difficult to blame Ammianus. First, the larger context has suggested that the overall description of the event was not too far from what might have happened. Second, Ammianus had himself admitted that his narrative of Julian's career would be marked by a tension between truth and eulogy (16.1.3). If he did push the envelope for his own view of Julian—ultimately highly influenced by Julian's own version—his warning that he "almost" wrote a panegyric excuses him from any accusation of dishonesty. If anything, modern scholars who fail to take note of Ammianus' warnings are to blame for taking his narrative at face value but not his preliminary disclosure. Perhaps it is a natural reflex for scholars who wish to see their discipline as a "scientific"

endeavor and who wish history to be straightforward. Unfortunately, modern students of history need constant reminder that the texts we use as databases are in reality the literary product of writers with agendas who composed their work in specific circumstances that affected their vision of the world. This oft-forgotten basic aspect of history needs to be reasserted and our methodology adjusted accordingly.

NOTES

* I wish to thank Hal Drake for discussing an early version of this chapter and suggesting a new way to approach the problem; Beth Digeser for reading and commenting on numerous drafts; and Bob Frakes and Gavin Kelly for suggesting many improvements and references. None of these generous scholars shall be held responsible for any remaining errors or the views expressed here.

1. "Accurate and faithful guide": Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. John B. Bury, vol. 1, p. 833 (New York, 1946); "imaginative literature": Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), 198. Cf. Gavin Kelly, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge, 2008), 1-4.
2. Cf. Joachim Szidat, "Ammian und die historische Realität," in Jan den Boeft et al., eds., *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam, 1992), 107-116, for a similar conclusion based on different material.
3. See esp. François Paschoud, "Ammien 31, 16,9: Une *recvsatio*?" *REL* 82 (2004): 238-248.
4. For the dating of Ammianus, see Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 8 ("between late-389 and mid-391"); cf. Edouard Galletier and Jacques Fontaine, *Ammien Marcellin*, vol. 1, p. 17-19 (Paris, 1968) (publication spread over the years 385-398); Jacques Fontaine et al., *Ammien Marcellin*, vol. 3, p. vii (Paris, 1996) (books 20-23 written 388-391); John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London, 1989), 8-27 (around 390). For the Christian reaction to Julian's reign, see esp. Greg. Naz., *Or.* 4-5, with the introduction and notes of Jean Bernardi, *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 4-5: Contre Julien* (Paris, 1983), and Soc., *HE* 3; cf. Philippe Molac, "L'image de Julien l'Apostat chez Saint Grégoire de Nazianze," *BLE* 102 (2001): 39-48, although referring exclusively to French scholarship.
5. Jacques Fontaine, "Le Julien d'Ammien Marcellin," in R. Braun and J. Richer, eds., *L'Empereur Julien: De l'histoire à la légende (331-1715)* (Paris, 1978), 31-65. Cf. Matthews, *Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 468-470.
6. On the rhetoric of *adventus*, see Sabine MacCormack, "Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The Ceremony of *Adventus*," *Historia* 21 (1972): 721-752, at 721; eadem, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1981), 17-22; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 1999), 196.

7. For the ceremony of *adventus* as an expression of legitimacy, see MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 21.
8. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 18-21, for the "pagan" aspects of the ceremony; "Change and Continuity," 733-735, for Julian's *adventus* as one of the last examples of this tradition.
9. Cf. Nicola Baglivi, *Ammianea* (Catania, 1999), for the view that Ammianus followed Julian's interpretation of the Constantinian dynasty; I owe this reference to Gavin Kelly.
10. See further Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 212-213, and 255, for Ammianus' use of Julian's writings.
11. Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 195, n. 98.
12. Susanna Elm, "Hellenism and Historiography: Gregory of Nazianzus and Julian in Dialogue," *JMEMS* 33 (3) (2003): 493-515, at 499. See further Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin: Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les Res Gestae* (Paris, 1978), 293-320; Matthews, *Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 98; Fontaine, *Ammien Marcellin*, vol. 3, xii-xiv; and David Potter, *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian* (New York, 1999), 92. Potter notably emphasizes the important point that even if Ammianus knew of other versions, i.e. Eunapius', he followed Julian's.
13. Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, 319.
14. Cf. Anthony J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (London, 1988), esp. 74-101 (on Cicero's conception of history, fundamental for Ammianus). Roger C. Blockley, "Ammianus and Cicero on Truth in Historiography," *AHB* 15.1 (2001), 14-24, takes issue with Woodman's view of Cicero and discusses the implications for Ammianus' "methodological statements." While my interpretation is closer to Woodman's, it seems that (in light of Blockley's criticism) he might be going too far in positing that ancient readers expected plausible fiction from history. Blockley, however, takes Ammianus' statements at face value, and following Fontaine ("Le Julien d'Ammien," 49) we should probably search for the reasons behind Ammianus' insistence that he is telling the truth.
15. Cf. Matthews, *Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 452-453, for insightful remarks on the characteristics of the historiographical genre in which Ammianus was writing.
16. Cf. Mamert., *Pan. Lat.* 11(3).7.3; Lib., *Or.* 12.63-64, 13.39-41, 18.111-112; Zos. 3.10.3; Greg. Naz., *Or.* 4.47, Soz., *HE* 5.1.1-5, and Zon. 13.11. See the important discussion of François Paschoud, *Zosime: Histoire Nouvelle* 2.1 (Paris, 1979): 91-93, n. 24-25; cf. C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara S. Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors* (Berkeley, 1994), 406, n. 52. Stephen Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire AD 284-641* (Oxford, 2007), 75-76, is a good summary of these events.
17. For Julian's sojourn in Naissus, which falls outside the scope of the present study, see Walter E. Kaegi, "The Emperor Julian at Naissus," *AC* 44 (1975): 161-171.
18. Paul Allard, *Julien l'Apostat* (Paris, 1903), 2.49-56; Jacques Benoist-Mechin, *L'Empereur Julien ou le rêve calciné* (Lausanne, 1969), 217-218; Robert Browning, *The Emperor Julian* (Berkeley, 1976), 114-116; Constance Head, *The Emperor*

Julian (Boston, 1976), 93-94; Adrian Murdoch, *The Last Pagan: Julian the Apostate and the Death of the Ancient World* (Stroud, 2003), 90-92.

19. Joachim Szidat, "Zur Ankunft Iulians in Sirmium 361 n. Chr. auf seinem Zug gegen Constantius II," *Historia* 24 (1975): 375-378 (May 12-19, 361); C.E.V. Nixon, "Aurelius Victor and Julian," *CP* 86 (1991): 113-125 (mid-July 361). Nixon's argument is accepted by Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 317, n. 64, and Harry W. Bird, "Julian and Aurelius Victor," *Latomus* 55.4 (1996): 870-874.
20. In addition to the works cited at n. 18, see: Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford, 1981), 80; Bird, "Aurelius Victor and Julian," 871; Glen W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge, MA, 1978), 58; MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, 46-47; eadem, "The Ceremony of *Adventus*," 733-734; Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 248 and 397; Miroslava Mirković, "Sirmium—Its History from the I. Century A.D. to 582 A.D.," in *Sirmium: Archeological Investigations in Sirmian Pannonia*, vol. 1, 5-90, at 39-40 (Beograd, 1971-1973).
21. Allard, *Julien l'Apostat*, 2.55; Benoist-Mechin, *L'Empereur Julien*, 217; Browning, *The Emperor Julian*, 116; Head, *The Emperor Julian*, 94; Murdoch, *The Last Pagan*, 92. Cf. the more rhetorically sensible comments of the Dutch commentators: Jan den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXI* (Groningen, 1991), 126. The potential allusion to the story of Cerialis, in Tac. *Hist.* 4.77, would support the view that Ammianus elaborated on this incident.
22. Edward D. Hunt, "Julian," in A. Cameron and P. Garnsey, eds., *Cambridge Ancient History* 13: *The Late Empire, A.D. 337-425* (Cambridge, 1998), 44-77, at 59. Cf. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 82, without discussion of this specific episode.
23. Edward D. Hunt, "The Successors of Constantine," in *CAH* 13.1-43, esp. 15-17, 21-22, and 32-36.
24. Pierre Renucci, *Les idées politiques et le gouvernement de l'empereur Julien* (Brussels, 2000), 231.
25. Shaun Tougher, review of P. Renucci, "Les idées politiques et le gouvernement de l'empereur Julien," *JRS* 93 (2003): 410-411; idem, *Julian the Apostate* (Edinburgh, 2007), 5.
26. Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 195-199, citation at 195.
27. Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 197. Cf. Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC–AD 337)* (Ithaca, NY, 1992 [1977]), 32, for earlier imperial examples.
28. Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 197, n. 115.
29. Matthews, *Roman Empire of Ammianus*, passim, esp. xiii, and 228; idem, "Ammianus on Roman Law and Lawyers," in *Cognitio Gestorum*, 47-57; cf. Norman J. E. Austin, "In Support of Ammianus' Veracity," *Historia* 22 (1973): 331-335; and idem, "Autobiography and History: Some Later Roman Historians and Their Veracity," in B. Croke and A. M. Emmett, eds., *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Sydney, 1983), 54-65. On the influence of Gibbon on Matthews, see Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 7. For recent historiographical appraisals of Ammianus scholarship, see Guy Sabbah,

"Ammianus Marcellinus," in G. Marasco, ed., *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2003), 43-84; Edward D. Hunt and Jan Willem Drijvers, "Introduction," in Hunt and Drijvers, eds., *The Late Roman World and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London, 1999), 1-14; François Paschoud, "Chronique ammianéenne," *AnTard* 10 (2002): 417-425, and esp. Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*.

30. Cf. Tougher, *Julian the Apostate*, 6; E .A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge, 1947), 86: "Ammianus condemned certain aspects of Julian's religious policy because he was not at liberty to do otherwise." Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 166-186, concluded from these criticisms that the historian did not share Julian's religious views, accepted by Mitchell, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, 73. On the limits of a biographical approach to Ammianus, see now Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 104-158.
31. Wilhelm Ensslin, *Die Geschichtsschreibung und Weltanschauung des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Leipzig, 1923); Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus*; Klaus Rosen, *Studien zur Darstellungskunst und Glaubwürdigkeit des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Heidelberg, 1968); idem, *Ammianus Marcellinus* (Darmstadt, 1982); Roger C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus: A Study of His Historiography and Political Thought* (Brussels, 1975). The quote is from Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality*. This formula is very popular for Ammianus: Szidat, "Ammian und die historische Realität," and Hans C. Teitler, "Ammianus and Constantius: Image and Reality," in *Cognitio Gestorum*, 117-122. Cf. Cathy King, "The Veracity of Ammianus Marcellinus's Description of the Huns," *AJAH* 12 (1995): 77-95; John F. Drinkwater, "Silvanus, Ursicinus, and Ammianus: Fact or Fiction?" in C. Deroux, ed., *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 7 (Brussels, 1994), 568-576; Josephina Lenssen, "The Persian Invasion of 359: Presentation by Suppression in Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res Gestae* 18.4.1-18.6.7," in *The Late Roman World and Its Historian*, 40-50.
32. François Paschoud, "À propos du nouveau livre de T. D. Barnes sur Ammien Marcellin," *AnTard* 7 (1999), 353-363; Averil Cameron, review of *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality*, by T. D. Barnes, *Phoenix* 53 (1999): 353-356.
33. See, e.g., Hayden White, "The Fictions of Factual Representation," in A. Fletcher, ed., *The Literature of Fact* (New York, 1976), 21-44; idem, "Rhetoric and History," in idem and F. E. Manuel, eds., *Theories of History: Papers Read at a Clark Library Seminar, March 6, 1976* (Berkeley, 1978), 3-24. For recent comments on White's influence from the perspective of Roman history, see Potter, *Literaty Texts*, 121, and 128-129. Cf. Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, MA, 2004); Hans Kellner, *Language and Historical Representation: Getting the Story Crooked* (Madison, WI, 1989); Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (New York, 1997).
34. Cameron, review of *Ammianus*, 354. Cf. Paschoud, "À propos du nouveau livre de T. D. Barnes," 360-361, for similar feelings. Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, is a much-needed reappraisal of Ammianus based on the literary merits, the creativity, and the intertextual nature of his text.

35. Amm. Marc. (henceforth AM) 31.16.9. The text of Ammianus is cited according to the Budé edition: E. Galletier et al., *Ammien Marcellin* (Paris, 1968-1999), 6 vols. Translations are from J. C. Rolfe, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1948-1952)(with slight modifications).
36. AM 16.1.3-4: Quicquid autem narrabitur, quod non falsitas arguat concinnat, sed fides integra rerum absoluit documentis euidentibus fulta, ad laudatiuam paene materiam pertinebit. Videtur enim lex quaedam uitae melioris hunc iuuenem a nobilibus cunis ad usque spiritum comitata supremum. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 37, who refers to 18.6.23 and 28.1.30. I owe the interpretation of "ad laudatiuam paene materiam pertinebit" to Gavin Kelly.
37. Sabbah *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, 19-22 and 41-47; cf. François Paschoud, "'Se non è vero, è ben trovato': Tradition littéraire et vérité historique chez Ammien Marcellin," *Chiron* 19 (1989): 37-54; Charles W. Fornara, "The Prefaces of Ammianus Marcellinus," in M. Griffith and D. J. Mastronarde, eds., *Cabinet of the Muses: Essays on Classical and Comparative Literature in Honor of Thomas G. Rosenmeyer* (Atlanta, 1990), 163-172; and Blockley, "Ammianus and Cicero on Truth in Historiography."
38. Fontaine, "Le Julien d'Ammien," 49.
39. AM 16.1.4 (see n. 36). Cf. the general remarks of den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, viii-ix.
40. Fontaine et al., *Ammien Marcellin* 3, viii-xiii.
41. AM 21.1.1. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 2-3.
42. AM 20.11.32. A point made by Fontaine et al., *Ammien Marcellin* 3, 199, n. 219.
43. AM 21.1.6. Cf. Jul, *Ep. ad Ath.* 284 B-285 D, in W. C. Wright, *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA, 1913), 280-285; *Ep.* 26.415 B (= *Ep.* 8 in Wright, vol. 3 [Cambridge, MA, 1923], 24-25) and 28.382 C (= *Ep.* 9 in Wright, vol. 3, 27); Lib., *Or.* 18.105 and 118, in A. F. Norman, *Libanius: Selected Works* (Cambridge, MA, 1969), 1.346-347 and 354-355.
44. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, ix, for a similar conclusion.
45. Apology: 21.1.8-13; anticipation of criticism: 21.1.7. Cf. R. L. Rike, *Apex Omnium: Religion in the Res Gestae of Ammianus* (Berkeley, 1987), 13; Matthews, *Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 424-431; den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 1 and 11-12.
46. AM 21.1.14: Tullius: "signa ostenduntur," ait, "a dis rerum futurarum. In his siqui errauerit, non deorum natura, sed hominum coniectura peccauit." Ammianus himself labels this passage a digression, at 21.1.14: sermo decurrens. For Ammianus' use of Cicero, see Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, passim.
47. Roger C. Blockley, "Ammianus and Cicero: The Epilogue of the *History* as a Literary Statement," *Phoenix* 52 (1998): 305-314, esp. 309-313, with earlier bibliography.
48. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 32-33; Matthews, *Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 315-317.

49. Ammianus could also have been following Julian's own account here: *Ep. ad Ath.* 286 A-B. See den Boeft et al.., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 38, for other sources. See further Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 212-213, on Ammianus' use of Julian's writings.
50. AM 21.3.6: [Vadomarius] scripserat: "Caesar tuus disciplinam non habet." Iulianum autem adsidue per litteras dominum et Augustum appellabat et deum; on which see den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 40-41.
51. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, viii, who describe Ammianus' report of the Vadomarius story as an illustration of the author's "very definite bias" on Julian and Constantius.
52. Cf. Fontaine et al., *Ammien Marcellin* 3, 208, n. 251.
53. See esp. AM 21.9.6. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 10, on 20.10. Speed is the common denominator in all the accounts of Julian's navigation of the Danube. See further Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 307, on Julian's speed as an *exemplum* for Valentinian.
54. Den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 63, describe this scene as a good example of "the tendency to 'theatrical' conduct, which is so characteristic of late antiquity." But the Dutch commentators see this as a reflection of actual practices. It seems that in Ammianus' case, it would be better to limit such conclusions to the literary aspect of these depictions.
55. AM 21.5.2. Fontaine et al., *Ammien Marcellin* 3, 211, n. 262, underlines Ammianus' use of "consilium" in this case, to emphasize the deliberative character of the assembly. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 53-54, for another parallel with Julian's *Ep. ad Ath.*
56. AM 16.12.67-70, 22.4.9 and 21.16.16, on which see Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 134.
57. AM 21.5.9. See den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 65, for the divine connotations. Cf. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus*, 88-89, for the suggestion that Julian must have made some promises to the soldiers.
58. Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, 397-398 and 414; cf. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 88, with refererences to Inez S. Ryberg, "Tacitus' Art of Innuendo," *TAPA* 73 (1942): 383-404, and Ronald Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), 314-316.
59. AM 21.5.13: Castris promotis et signis, [Iulianus] temere se fortunae conmisit ambiguae.
60. Guy Sabbah, review of *Einige Ueberlegungen zur kaiser-zeitlichen Panegyrik und zu Ammians Charakteristik des Kaisers Julian*, by H. Gartner, *REL* 48 (1970): 597. The passage of Lucian alluded to by Sabbah (without reference) is *Hist. conscr.* 7.
61. AM 21.6.2: Constantius circa haec lenior solito: "desinite," ait, "urgere hominem ut existimo sontem, sed nondum aperte conuictum, et mementote quod, si quid admisit huiusmodi, sub obtutibus meis conscientiae ipsius sententia punietur, quam latere non poterit."
62. AM 21.6.3: Unde Constantius <ut> futurorum quoque praescius exultabat. See the contrasting parallel of 22.9.16, the outcome of which could have been

presented as a direct contrast to the present story. It would not escape the reader that Amphilochius died in front of Constantius while Julian found a way to make peace with Thalassius. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 79.

63. AM 21.6.3. Contra den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 74. The Dutch commentators take Ammianus' narrative literally and fail to see the irony of this vignette.
64. AM 21.7.1. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 94.
65. AM 21.7.1. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, ix.
66. AM 21.7.6. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 102.
67. AM 21.8.3. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 112, without reference to the literary device. Instead, they emphasize Julian's veneration of the Macedonian king and his popularity in the fourth century. For Ammianus' use of *exempla*, see now Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, esp. 256-295; Frank Wittchow, *Exemplarisches Erzählen bei Ammianus Marcellinus: Episode, Exemplum, Anekdote* (Leipzig, 2001), a reference I owe to Robert Frakes; Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus: A Study of His Historiography and Political Thought*, 157-167; idem, "Ammianus Marcellinus' Use of *Exempla*," *Florilegium* 13 (1994): 53-64.
68. AM 21.9.2. Ammianus' explanation for this event, the role of Fortuna, has naturally led to some discussion over Julian's acquisition of these boats: Allard, *Julien l'Apostat*, 2.52, invokes the possibility that the fleet was secured through the betrayal of Constantius' men; Joseph Bidez, *La vie de l'empereur Julien* (Paris, 1930), 193, imagines that Julian organized it, followed by Browning, *The Emperor Julian*, 115. Contra E. A. Thompson, "Three Notes on Julian in 361 A.D.," *Hermathena* 72 (1943): 83-95, at 90, criticizes both Bidez and Allard for going against "Ammianus' explicit statement." Allard and Bidez, at least, were being critical of their sources. Cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 115, with earlier references, and a slight preference for Bidez's interpretation based on Lib., *Or.* 13.40, which should clinch the matter. Murdoch, *The Last Pagan*, 230, n. 19, refers to a recent study on the kind of boats Julian would have used: Olaf Höckmann, "Late Roman Rhine Vessels from Mainz, Germany," *IJNA* 22.2 (1993): 125-136.
69. Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 96, on AM 26.10.19.
70. Edouard Galletier, *Panégyriques Latins*, vol. 3, p. 9 (Paris, 1955) (followed by MacCormack, "Change and Continuity," 733, n. 78); Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, 243-292 and 321-346.
71. Mamert., *Pan. Lat.* 11 (3).6.3 (in Galletier, 3.21): Vidimus, felices illius uiae comites.
72. Pierre Dufraigne, "Quelques remarques sur l'*adventus* chez Ammien Marcellin et les panégyristes," in J.-C. Fredouille and L. Holt, eds., *De Tertullien aux Mozarabe: Antiquité tardive et christianisme ancien (III^{e}-VI^{e} siècles): Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine* (Paris, 1992), 497-509, at 497. It is unfortunate, however, that Dufraigne ignores the fundamental studies of MacCormack on the *adventus*.
73. AM 21.9.6, on which see Dufraigne, "Quelques remarques," 501. For rapidity as a topos of panegyrics, see McCormack, "Continuity and Change," 727, n. 38, for numerous examples.

74. AM 21.9.3, on which see Fontaine et al., *Ammien Marcellin* 3, 222-223, n. 307; cf. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary*, 118. For the importance of Virgil in Ammianus, see Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, passim.
75. AM 22.2.3, on which see Dufraigne, "Quelques remarques," 502.
76. AM 21.10.1. Cf. Fontaine et al., *Ammien Marcellin* 3, 225 n. 319.
77. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 20, with references to Menander's prescription that the writer should describe the ruler arriving "as a star from on high," and 45-50.
78. Cf. Lib. *Or.* 13.39 (in Norman, 1.24-25): **"**the vessels that brought freedom to all men."
79. Zos. 3.9.6, along with the comments of Paschoud, *Zosime* 2.1, 89-90. Cf. Jul. *Ep.* 26.415B; 28.382C.
80. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 47. Cf. Pierre Dufraigne, *Adventus Augusti, Adventus Christi: Recherches sur l'exploitation idéologique et littéraire d'un cérémonial dans l'antiquité tardive* (Paris, 1994), 185.
81. McCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 46. Cf. the words put in Lucillianus' mouth in presence of Julian, at AM 21.9.8. In fact, one could argue that Lucillianus is right. But Ammianus' reader gets the very clear sense that Lucillianus is on the side of the villain, and so his words are thus discounted and presented as insolent. See further Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 281-282.
82. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ed. Bury, 1.651. Gibbon apparently discarded the testimony of Lib., *Or.* 13.41 (in Norman 1.26-27).
83. Bird, "Julian and Aurelius Victor," 872, ascribes the loyalty of Constantius' soldiers to the emperor's reputation in overcoming usurpers. Cf. Walter E. Kaegi, "Domestic Military Problems of Julian the Apostate," *ByzF* 2 (1967): 247-264, esp. 247-251, for an examination of the military support that benefited Julian until Constantius' death. Cf. Lib., *Or.* 18.111 (Norman 1.350-351), for Julian using a stratagem to penetrate an undisclosed fortified city, which implicitly attests that the city was not eager to welcome Julian like a "salutary star." See further Claire Sotinel, "Aquilée de Dioclétien à Théodose," in G. Cuscito, ed., *Antichità altoadriatiche* 54: *Aquileia dalle origini alla costituzione del ducato longobardeo: Storia, amministrazione, società* (Trieste, 2003), 375-403; eadem, *Identité civique et christianisme: Aquilée du III^e au VI^e siècle* (Rome, 2005), 57-59 (references I owe to Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 238, n. 29).
84. *CTh.* 11.30.7 has Constantine at Sirmium on June 6, 317. Constantius was born on August 7, 317, and Jul., *Or.* 1.5 D specifies that it was in Illyricum.
85. AM 17.12-13. For Constantius at Sirmium in the 350s, see Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 221-223; cf. Hunt, "The Successors of Constantine," 32-36.
86. Mirković, "Sirmium," 39, n. 227.
87. AM 17.13.25 and 34. Cf. Hunt, "The Successors of Constantine," 32.
88. See, inter alia, *Pan. Lat.* 8(5).5-7 (Galletier, 2.77-83; Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors*, 255; MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 272-278 and 286-287, n. 56-60). Cf. Athan., *De Incarn.* 9.3.
89. AM 15.3.7-9. The expression is from Ronald Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1968), 66-68.
90. Mirković, "Sirmium," 39, who mistakenly designates the host of the banquet as "Apricanus."

91. Jul. *Ep. ad Ath.* 273 C-D (Wright, 2.256-257). Cf. Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta*, 66-68, who argues that the author of the *Historia Augusta* also knew about this episode.
92. AM 19.11, esp. 7-12. The throne and the golden cushion are mentioned at 19.11.12.
93. Aur. Vict., *De Caes.* 42.24-25 (F. Pichlmayr [Leipzig, 1961], 129; tr. Harry W. Bird, *Aurelius Victor: De Caesaribus* [Liverpool, 1994], 54). The interpretation of this passage is controversial, as well as the circumstances of writing. I follow the interpretation of Bowersock, *Julian*, 59. Cf. Bird, *Aurelius Victor*, viii-ix, 206-207, n. 19; idem, "Julian and Aurelius Victor"; contra Nixon, "Aurelius Victor and Julian," n. 17. See further Kelly, *The Allusive Historian*, 285, on Victor in Sirmium.
94. AM 21.10.6. Cf. Chester G. Starr, "Aurelius Victor: Historian of Empire," *AHR* 61.3 (1956): 574-586, at 575, n. 1, who cites *CIL* 6.1186 as well as other sources.
95. Bowersock, *Julian*, 59; Pierre Dufraigne, *Aurelius Victor: Livre des Césars* (Paris, 1975), xi-xii. See the other references given (with disapproval) by Nixon, "Aurelius Victor and Julian," 119, n. 18.
96. Dufraigne, *Aurelius Victor*, xii.
97. Discharged: AM 16.11.1-7; until 363: AM 25.10.6-9. For general discussion, see David Woods, "A Note concerning the Early Career of Valentinian I," *AncSoc* 26 (1995): 273-288, esp. 273-277. Woods is not specific about Valentinian' residence, despite Barnes' reference to the contrary in *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 52, n. 30.
98. Noel Lenski, "Were Valentinian, Valens, and Jovian Confessors before Julian the Apostate?" *ZAC* 6 (2001): 253-276, at 258, referring to *PLRE* 1, "Fl. Gratianus 2." Idem, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, 2002), 49, cautiously refrains from assigning a specific place for Valentinian's residence in this period.
99. Woods, "A Note concerning the Early Career of Valentinian," 278.
100. AM 30.5.10, a reference I owe to Lenski, "Were Valentinian, Valens, and Jovian Confessors?" 258, n. 31.
101. Cf. Robert O. Edbrooke, "The Visit of Constantius II to Rome in 357 and Its Effect on the Pagan Roman Senatorial Aristocracy," *AJPh* 97 (1976): 40-61, who emphasizes the importance of ecclesiastical politics for Constantius, despite Ammianus. Contra Dufraigne, "Remarques sur l'*adventus*," 509, who does not seem to be aware of Edbrooke's article (or MacCormack's fundamental work on the topic).
102. See esp. AM 26.1.2. Cf. Averil and Alan Cameron, "Christianity and Tradition in the Historiography of the Late Empire," *CQ* 14.2 (1964): 316-328; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 81-82.
103. AM 21.2.4: Utque omnes nullo impediente, ad sui favorem inliceret, adhaerere cultui Christiano fingebat (emphasis added).
104. Bowersock, *Julian*, 56.
105. Hanns C. Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitiers und die Bischofsopposition gegen Konstantius II: Untersuchungen zur 3: Phase des Arianischen Streites (337-361)* (Berlin, 1984), 360-367; idem, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer: Der Osten bis*

zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche (Tübingen, 1988), 83, 87-91; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 153-154; cf. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 82.

106. Patricia Just, *Imperator et Episcopus: Zum Verhältnis von Staatsgewalt und christlicher Kirche zwischen dem 1. Konzil von Nicaea (325) und dem 1. Konzil von Konstantinopel (381)* (Stuttgart, 2003), 68-78, 165-170; Michel Meslin, *Les Ariens d'Occident, 335-430* (Paris, 1967), 59-84; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, passim; Richard P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Edinburgh, 1988), 325-379; Hunt, "Successors of Constantine," 32-37.
107. *Contra* Just, *Imperator und Episcopus*, 224-225; Richard Klein, *Constantius II. und die christliche Kirche* (Darmstadt, 1977), 86-89; and Edward D. Hunt, "Did Constantius II Have 'Court Bishops'?" *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989): 86-90. See Luc. Calarit., *De non conveniendo* 7: familiares amici; and Hil., *In Const.* 10.13, and esp. 27.19: cum paucis satellibus tuis profanus impugnas.
108. See now Sonia Laconi, *Costanzo II: Ritratto di un imperatore eretico* (Rome, 2004), 33-52; cf. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 101-182; and the stimulating remarks of Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 315-325.
109. Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 325-328; Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte*, 91-93; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 109-115. Cf. the perceptive remarks of Hunt, "The Successors of Constantine," 23, on Constantius' involvement in these ecclesiastical debates amid preparations for war against Magnentius.
110. These events are summarized in numerous works. See, *inter alia*, Meslin, *Les Ariens*, 71-84; Gunther Gottlieb, "Les évêques et les Empereurs dans les affaires ecclésiastiques du 4e siècle," *MH* 33 (1976): 38-50; Yves-Marie Duval, "Aquilée et Sirmium durant la crise arienne (325-400)," *Antichità Altoadriatiche* 26 (2) (1985): 345-354; André Rocher, *Hilaire de Poitiers: Contre Constance* (Paris, 1987), 10-64; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 315-386; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 109-120 and 136-151; Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford, 1995), 17-21. See esp. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 231-232, for a discussion regarding the meetings of 357 to 359.
111. See esp. Sulp. Sev., *Chron.* 2.38-39, for the presence of the Illyrian bishops, and esp. Valens, at Arles and Milan, for which see Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, 1994), 15-19. For Sirmium 359: Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 144-145, and 284, n. 2; cf. Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 362-370. Liberius' letter: Hil., *Frg. hist.* Ser. B VII, 10 (*CSEL* 65.170).
112. Sulp. Sev., *Chron.* 2.37.5; Soc., *HE* 2.29-30; Soz. *HE* 4.6.1-16; Epiph., *Pan.* 71.1-5. On Photinus, see Manlio Simonetti, *Studi sull'arianesimo* (Rome, 1965), 135-159.
113. Hil., *Frg. hist.* Ser. B II 9.1 (*CSEL* 65.146): Uerum inter haec Syrmium conuenitur. Fotinus hereticus deprehensus, olim reus pronuntiatus et a communione iam pridem unitatis abscisus, ne tum quidem per factionem populi potuit ammoueri. The translation of Lionel R. Wickham, *Hilary of Poitiers: Conflicts of Conscience and Law in the Fourth-Century Church* (Liverpool, 1997), 56, as "could not even then be brought through a popular faction,"

plays down "ammoueri" in a way that obscures its meaning. The historical interpretation of this text is controversial. Most believe it refers to a council of Sirmium that met in 347 or 348: Jacques Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain* (Rome, 1918), 263-264; Duval, "Aquilée et Sirmium," 339 and 343; Hanson, *Search for a Christian Doctrine*, 313; Meslin, *Les Ariens*, 264-268. Cf. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 231 and 266, n. 28, who denies the historicity of this council and ascribes this passage to the council of 351. The mention by Athanasius (*Hist. Ar.* 74) and Sozomen (*HE* 4.6.16), however, that Photinus was exiled contradicts Hilary's report on the impossibility of removing Photinus because of the popular support he enjoyed. It seems best to retain the traditional interpretation here.

114. Zeiller, *Origines Chrétiennes*, 292-297, accepted by Daniel H. Williams, "Another Exception to Later Fourth-Century 'Arian' Typologies: The Case of Germinius of Sirmium," *JECS* 4 (3) (1996): 335-357, at 355. Julian had some affinities with Photinus because the bishop's theology denied Christ's divinity. Facundius of Hermiane translated into Latin a letter that Julian wrote to the bishop, probably after 362: *Ep.* 90 (in Wright, 3.186-191, esp. 186-187, n. 4 for the date).
115. *Altercatio Heracliani laici cum Germinio, episcopo Sirmiensi* (in *PLS* 1.345). Cf. Daniel H. Williams, "The Anti-Arian Campaigns of Hilary of Poitiers and the 'Liber Contra Auxentium,'" *CH* 61 (1992): 7-22, at 17. On the *Altercatio*, see M. Simonetti, "Osservazione sull'Altercatio," *VChr* 21 (1967): 39-58. R. Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1995), 137, does not seem to be aware of Simonetti's. This leads to an unfortunate reading of the *Altercatio* at face value. It is surprising that a study devoted to public debates in this period does not analyze this text more extensively.
116. Eusebius: Soc., *HE* 3.9 (after the council of Alexandria). Hilary: Yves-Marie Duval, "Vrais et faux problèmes concernant le retour d'exil d'Hilaire de Poitiers et son action en Italie en 360-363," *Athenaeum* 48 (1970): 251-275; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 153; cf. Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 322.
117. Soz., *HE* 4.24.6.
118. *Altercatio Heracliani* (*PLS* 1.350).
119. Jul., *Ep.* 15, 24 (Wright, 3.34-37, 74-77); AM 22.5.2-4; Soz. 5.5.9.
120. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 154. Cf. Bowersock, *Julian*, 70-71, for the suggestion that Julian recalled the bishops from Naissus.
121. Hil., *Frg. hist.* Ser. A I 4 (*CSEL* 65.45).
122. Williams, "The Case of Germinius of Sirmium," 345.
123. Williams, "The Case of Germinius of Sirmium," 356.
124. Ibid.
125. Williams, "The Case of Germinius of Sirmium," 346-348, with references to the documents preserved in Hilary's work.

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2

BUTHERIC AND THE CHARIOTEER

Robert M. Frakes

> "Stand back! A man defiled by sin, and with hands imbrued in blood unjustly shed, is not worthy, without repentance, to enter within these sacred precincts, or partake of the holy mysteries." [1]

So the fifth-century church historian Sozomen relates the famous confrontation between Bishop Ambrose of Milan and the emperor Theodosius I regarding his massacre of thousands in Thessalonica. While this actual physical confrontation probably never occurred, Ambrose did avoid Theodosius and then excommunicated him through epistolary means.[2] Nevertheless, the tradition of this dramatic episode is a touchstone in the history of church-state relations and the image of political authority from Late Antiquity through the Middle Ages (a subject long of interest to H. A. Drake).[3] While scholars have examined different aspects of this confrontation for over a century, less attention has been given to the actual cause of the massacre in Thessalonica. Several primary sources do state that the people of that northern Greek garrison city had killed a Roman general (probably named Butheric) and Theodosius ordered the reprisal. But why did the people of Thessalonica riot and kill Butheric? Reexamining the primary sources for the massacre and evidence from Roman law in the light of the chronology of the events can provide a clearer understanding of the issues involved and also possibly clarify the reception of Theodosius' actions.

A brief look at our surviving primary sources can establish what occurred. The earliest description of the event comes from Ambrose himself. In an epistle written in 390, the bishop of Milan relates that something terrible had occurred in Thessalonica and Theodosius had at first leaned toward not punishing the inhabitants, but then changed his mind, which led to the unjust slaughter (and ultimately to Ambrose's

withholding of the sacrament).[4] Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 345–411/412) writing c. 400 provides the additional detail for the event that a crowd in Thessalonica had rioted and killed an officer.[5] A few years later, c. 412, Paulinus of Nola (c. 352-431) adds that several of Theodosius' officials had urged him to change his mind about pardoning the citizens and instead put the city to the sword.[6] Around 450 Theodoret (c. 393–460/466) gives greater coverage and says that a riot of the citizens in Thessalonica had lead to the death of several magistrates and that the *Magister Officiorum* Rufinus had especially fanned the emperor's anger which led to seven thousand being killed.[7] Augustine (345-430) refers to the event in his *City of God* and relates that Theodosius had promised the Western bishops in a Church council that he would forgive the citizens, but the emperor was persuaded by his secular advisers to punish them instead.[8] By the twelfth century the story had evolved and Zonaras relates that Theodosius himself was the one insulted in Thessalonica and his prefect murdered, which is why he ordered the massacre.[9]

It appears safe to accept that there was a riot in Thessalonica and that some of the inhabitants killed an important military officer. Thessalonica had become an important strategic location for the northern frontier since the battle of Adrianople in 378.[10] Because the killing of an important general was a challenge to imperial authority, Theodosius was obviously upset. It could even be, as the sources relate, that the emperor was urged on by some of his high officials to punish the citizens, after he had originally told bishops in Italy that he would treat the citizens with fairness.

What is still murky is what actually caused the riot. To understand this event, we must return to Sozomen's narrative, written somewhere between c. 439 and 450.[11] After relating the dramatic confrontation with Ambrose in Milan (presented at the beginning of this chapter), Sozomen states that the ultimate cause of the sin was Theodosius' massacre in Thessalonica in revenge for the lynching of his general Butheric. (The general's name suggests he was of German, perhaps Gothic, extraction, which is logical as so many Germans had entered the Roman military for decades.) Sozomen clarifies that the reason the people of Thessalonica were so upset was that Butheric had imprisoned a popular charioteer. In Sozomen's words: "When Butheric was commanding the soldiers in Illyria, a charioteer saw his cup-bearer and made a lewd advance on him, [and] the charioteer was arrested."[12] That is, the charioteer had made a sexual overture to the general's cup-bearer (or οἰνοχόος). After an unknown amount of time, supporters of the charioteer demanded his release for an important upcoming race. When Butheric refused, the

supporters of the charioteer rioted and in the ensuing chaos Butheric was killed.[13]

These details are missing from the other sources. But it is quite possible that they derived from a source that was unavailable to Ambrose, Rufinus, and Augustine. While scholars have debated the exact relationship between the histories of Theodoret and Sozomen,[14] in this case it is not critical for Theodoret does not mention these details. Sozomen is traditionally seen as a fairly reliable source. He was probably educated in both classical works and the Bible in his youth.[15] Later he studied at the famous law school in Beirut (or Berytus), where he would have mastered Latin, and then moved to Constantinople c. 425, where he worked in the imperial administration and may have been close to the imperial court.[16] While he drew much of his material from the histories of Socrates Scholasticus and Rufinus, the account regarding the origin of the riot in Thessalonica is not in those slightly earlier narratives.[17] Regarding his methodology, Sozomen states that his sources included his own observations, information from older people, and documents in imperial and church archives.[18] Theresa Urbainczyk has pointed out that one of the areas in which Sozomen's history differed from Socrates' was in his description of church-state relations (which might have included our passage regarding the genesis of the massacre).[19] It seems reasonable to hypothesize that while in Constantinople Sozomen came in contact with an oral or written source for the account of Butheric and the charioteer which may well have been valid since other aspects of his account accord well with earlier sources.

Sozomen's account thus seems plausible and most scholars have accepted that the *Magister Militum* Butheric was killed by a riot in Thessalonica.[20] The zeal of support for charioteers among the circus factions in the later Roman Empire is notorious.[21] In the late eighteenth century Edward Gibbon would use Sozomen's account as the basis for his description that Butheric had a beautiful slave boy who "excited the impure desires of one of the charioteers." Butheric's imprisonment of the charioteer led to a riot in which the depleted garrison was overrun and the general and many of his officers killed and "dragged about the streets."[22]

Scholars have admitted confusion on different aspects of the events in Thessalonica. One problem is the chronology of events. Theodoret relates that Theodosius had to do penance for eight months after his confrontation with Ambrose before he was allowed to attend a Christmas service and only then after he promised to enact a law that would force a thirty-day delay before any future such punishment.[23] Working backward from 25 December, we would arrive at sometime in mid to late April for Ambrose's excommunication of Theodosius after the massacre, which,

allowing some time for word to spread, might have then occurred in March or before.[24] The riot that led to Butheric's death would then have occurred sometime before that (perhaps in January or February). There are two problems with this sequence. First, it seems unlikely that an important race would have been scheduled in the middle of winter, since the riot occurred because a circus faction demanded the charioteer's release.[25] Second, the "thirty-day law" survives, but is dated August 382.[26] Now, the year must be wrong and most scholars have accepted a re-dating to August 390.[27] But Theodoret implies that Ambrose forced Theodosius to create this law shortly before Christmas, not in August. Since Theodoret is known to spin events to make them more dramatic, it could be that the law was created in August and then Ambrose let Theodosius stew awhile before allowing him the sacrament at the important celebration of Christmas. This interpretation would still allow the massacre to take place a month or two before August (allowing time for word of the massacre to reach Ambrose, for him to send a message to Theodosius, for the *consistorium* to then draft the law, and for Theodosius to approve it).[28] This would then place the massacre in perhaps May or June of 390 and the death of Butheric a month or two before (and, indeed, if it took place in April, that might have been the kernel of the tradition of the misdeed occurring eight months before Christmas).[29]

Another problem is the location of the massacre. Most scholars, following Rufinus, state boldly that the people of Thessalonica were invited to the circus or hippodrome by the emperor's officers before the emperor unleashed his vengeance.[30] Yet how slim is the likelihood that the inhabitants would show up when they must have realized the danger? Moreover, Sozomen does treat the massacre as an event that quickly grew out of hand. Some astute modern scholars have argued that this scholarly misunderstanding is simply a conflation of the desires of the circus faction for the charioteer's release and the riot that led to Butheric's death with the later imperial bloodbath.[31] I agree with that and would like to suggest that the image of the later Nika riots, where Justinian ordered a blood bath of circus factions in Constantinople in the sixth century, may be coloring the lens through which modern scholars have viewed the earlier massacre in Thessalonica.

The last problem—and the most complicated—is the actual cause of the riot. Confusion in some scholarly examinations has been exacerbated by the standard English translation of Sozomen's history in the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series published in 1890. Translating the critical passage regarding the cause, Chester D. Hartranft wrote: "When Butheric was general of the troops in Illyria, a charioteer saw him shamefully exposed at a tavern, and attempted an outrage; he was apprehended and

put in custody."[32] Clearly, Hartranft misunderstood and thought that Butheric, not the cup-bearer, was the object of the charioteer's advance (possibly because he mistakenly understood οἰνοχόον as an adjective for being drunk with wine—but that does not agree either with Butheric, whose name is in the genitive as part of a genitive absolute construction, or with the charioteer, which is in the nominative). Scholars in the Anglophone world after 1890 were naturally influenced both by this translation and indeed by squeamishness over the homosexuality implied. For instance, Thomas Hodgkin in 1899 simply stated "The cause of this sedition is so connected with the unnatural vices of the Graeco-Roman population of that period, that a modern historian prefers to leave it undescribed."[33] Unfortunately, a recent German translation makes other mistakes and makes the charioteer into Butheric's servant ("ein Wagenlenker Butherichs").[34] Often, historians have avoided the problem altogether and skipped along to the riot and reprisal.[35] My personal favorite is N. Q. King, who, in an otherwise useful work on Theodosius, follows Hartranft and states that the charioteer tried to rape Butheric.[36] More recent scholars accept that the events in Thessalonica are complex and unclear (and most tend to gloss over the cause).[37]

Some of the few scholars who have confronted the event and sought a critical cause for the arrest have pointed to a law of Theodosius that survives in both the *Theodosian Code* and, in longer form, in the late Roman law book known variously as the *Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum* or *Lex Dei*.[38] This suggestion cannot be correct. Leaving aside the fact that the law, which is dated to May 390, was probably issued after the arrest of the charioteer, the content forbids homosexual prostitution and orders that men who allow their bodies to be used in a female manner in male brothels should be publicly burned.[39] As the content of the law does not jibe with the account in Sozomen's history, which does not mention anything about homosexual prostitution, this law could not have been the basis for Butheric's arrest of the charioteer, as a few scholars have noticed.[40]

What law, then, did the charioteer break? Some scholars have suggested violations like "gross indecency," "sodomy," "immorality," or an insult to "Butheric's honor."[41] To be clear, we must remember that Sozomen states that the charioteer attempted sex, not that he succeeded. Several Roman laws treat aspects of male homosexuality.[42] The earliest known example is the *Lex Scantinia*, which seems to date from the middle Republic.[43] Although the text of the law itself has not survived, it appears that this law ordered the punishment of men who raped young male Roman citizens. Although this law is mentioned in various sources in the late Republic and early Empire, sometimes the allusions take on a farcical tone, as in the

works of Cicero and Juvenal (similar to modern references to the Mann Act of 1910 in popular literature).[44] Satirical references to the *Lex Scantinia* continue into the fourth century with allusions by Ausonius and Prudentius. Indeed, the Christian Prudentius wrote that Jupiter could be prosecuted under the *Lex Scantinia* for his abduction of the Trojan Prince Ganymede.[45] It would seem unlikely that such an archaic law could have been dusted off by a Germanic general in the late fourth century and it probably did not even apply if the cup-bearer was a slave, as many scholars suspect, or if no actual rape occurred.[46] Sozomen clearly states this was an attempt at sex, but he implies it was not successful. Moreover, the first-century Quintilian implies the punishment stipulated by the *Lex Scantinia* was a fine of 10,000 sesterces, not imprisonment.[47]

There are additional Roman laws regarding homosexuality. The sixth-century *Institutes* of Justinian states (at 4.18.4) that under Octavian part of the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis* (created in 17 BCE) treated homosexual relations ("those who might dare to practise their shameful lust with males").[48] While this sounds promising, we have no evidence of this law actually dating from the Principate and this clause is missing from the equivalent part of the *Institutes* of Gaius, which was the basis for Justinian's handbook. Thus, it seems this alleged law was probably a sixth-century invention that fit well with Christian views of homosexuality.

A more plausible suggestion is that Butheric arrested the charioteer on a charge of *iniuria*.[49] In classical Roman law, this offense could pertain to unlawful damage, defamation, or physical injury, but this type of crime was a delict (or private crime) and was punished by fines, flogging, and exile, but not by imprisonment, and so does not seem to fit Butheric's punishment of the charioteer.[50] Even while later Roman laws did allow masters to file suit for injuries suffered by their slaves, this still would result in a private action for monetary damages before a civil judge, not imprisoning of the perpetrator.[51]

There is an extremely murky law issued by Constantius II and Constans (*CTh* 9. 7. 3= *CJ* 9. 9. 30 of 342) that either condemned homosexual marriages or sham marriages.[52] Again, this does not seem to pertain to the case of the charioteer. So, either Butheric was mistakenly applying archaic laws 400 or more years old (if the *Lex Scantinia* did indeed apply or if Octavian did indeed produce the anti-homosexual legislation described by Justinian), or he was wrongly punishing a crime of *iniuria*. Or something else is happening.

One other possibility, so far as I know not raised by other scholars, must be considered. Anyone schooled in classical literature would be struck by the description of the attractive boy holding the position of cup-bearer (or οἰνοχόος). One of the most famous episodes treating male

homosexual interest in Greek mythology is Zeus' attraction to the Trojan prince Ganymede, whom he abducts to Mt. Olympus, where he is made the cup-bearer of the gods (a story still known by Prudentius in the late fourth century).[53] It has recently been noted that there are many examples of traditional classical education in Sozomen's history (including allusions to Homer and various examples from Greek mythology).[54] It is thus intriguing to contemplate that Sozomen may have been hinting that Butheric had a sexual interest in the cup-bearer himself and improperly jailed the charioteer out of jealousy. Although earlier scholars felt that part of the tension between Butheric and the charioteer was that Germans were moral and Greeks were degenerate,[55] Ammianus (writing at the time of the event) suggests that some barbarian tribes practiced homosexuality with their youths.[56] While Butheric's own interest in the cup-bearer can only be a possibility, it seems no less plausible than a Gothic general with knowledge of four- or five-hundred-year-old Roman laws (which do not seem to apply anyway).

Many people in Thessalonica would naturally have felt exasperated that Butheric had no legal grounds to arrest the charioteer (whether because he was ignorant of the law, misapplying the law, or because of his own interest in the cup-bearer). When Butheric seemed to be holding the charioteer for an extended period, their frustration grew (and increased further as the important race approached). What may have been a cultural misunderstanding ballooned until the charioteer's supporters exploded and killed the Germanic general. Now, Theodosius would naturally have perceived the killing of his general as a slap in the face of imperial power (and it is important to remember he had just faced a series of internal crises with first the usurper Magnus Maximus from 383-388 and then with recent upheavals in Antioch in 387 and in Callinicum and Constantinople in 388).[57] He, or his advisers, may have felt that the time was right to make a display of force to reestablish his authority.[58] Such actions of course jar with the image of a Christian emperor (especially if it became known that Butheric's original actions may have been unlawful). This incongruence led, one way or another, to Ambrose's response. It is insightful that no pagan source, even ones hostile to Theodosius, mentions the episode of Butheric and the charioteer, or even the massacre.[59] To non-Christian writers, an emperor punishing his own citizens for killing a general might simply have been business as usual.

NOTES

1. Sozomen, *HE* 7.25. English translation from Chester D. Hartranft, trans., *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen*, NPNF, 2d ser. (New York, 1890), 2:393-394.
2. Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, 1994), 323-324; John Mattthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364-425* (Oxford, 1975), 235.
3. On the episode's afterlife, see R. Schieffer, "Von Mailand nach Canossa," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 28 (1972): 333-370. See also the interesting remarks of Daniel Washburn, "The Thessalonian Affair in the Fifth-Century Church Histories," in H. A. Drake, ed., *Violence in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 2006), 215-224. The most thorough modern treatment remains McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 291-360.
4. Ambrose, *Ep.* 51.
5. Rufinus, *HE* 11.18. See Philip R. Amidon, trans., *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia, Books 10 and 11* (Oxford, 1997), 110. Scholars variously cite this passage as 11.18 and 2.18, since Rufinus continued the church history of Eusebius (I would like to thank Philip Amidon for his comments to me on the scholarly tradition of citing the work). On Rufinus, see further F. X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works* (Washington, 1945); Torben Christensen, *Rufinus of Aquileia and the "Historia Ecclesiastica" Lib. VIII-IX of Eusebius* (Copenhagen, 1989); D. Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London, 2002), 93-107; and, most recently, Peter van Deun, "The Church Historians after Eusebius," in Gabriele Marasco, ed., *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2003), 160-167.
6. Paulius of Nola, *Vita Ambrosii*, 24. On Paulinus, see further Dennis Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, Poems* (Berkeley, 1999).
7. Theodoret, *HE* 5.17. On Theodoret and the dating of his work, see further G. Chesnut, "The Date of Composition of Theodoret's Church History," *Vet. Christ.* 35 (1981): 245-252; B. Croke, "Dating Theodoret's Church History and Commentaries of the Psalms," *Byzantion* 54 (1984): 59-79; G. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Evagrius* (Macon, 1986); T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 209; T. Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Bishop and the Holy Man* (Ann Arbor, 2002), especially 31; Hartmut Leppin, "The Church Historians (1): Socrates, Sozomenus, and Theodoretus," in G. Marasco, *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2003), 225-246. On the *magister officiorum* Rufinus, see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 235-236.
8. Augustine, *De Civitate Deo*, 5.26. On this great church figure, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley, 1967), and James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography* (New York, 2005). It is possible that the synod in question was one of the two in Italy in that year treating the heresy of Jovinianus. See further David G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* (Oxford, 2007), especially 16-17, where he prefers a later dating for the synod that condemned Jovinianus.

9. Zonaras, 13.18. A scholarly monograph on Zonaras in English is still a desideratum (which Thomas Banchich of Canisius College is currently writing). I would like to thank Professor Banchich for his comments on the pertinent passage from Zonaras. Michael Di Maio, "Zonaras' Account of the Neo-Flavian Emperors" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1977), is still useful. See also B. Bleckmann, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung: Untersuchungen zu den nachdionischen Quellen der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras* (Munich, 1992).
10. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 316-317.
11. There is dispute over the exact date: See further G. Schoo, *Die Quellen des Kirchenhistorikers Sozomenos* (Berlin, 1911), 10; J. Harries, "Sozomen and Eusebius: The Lawyer as Church Historian in the Fifth Century," in C. Holdsworth and T. P. Wiseman, eds., *The Inheritance of Historiography, A.D. 350-900* (Exeter, 1986), 45-52; C. Roueché, "Theodosius II, the Cities, and the Date of the 'Church History' of Sozomen," *JTS* 37 (1986): 130-132; Alan Cameron, "The Empress and the Poet: Paganism and Politics at the Court of Theodosius II," *Yale Classical Studies* 27 (1982): 279-285; Leppin, "Church Historians," 223-225; and Eran I. Argov, "A Church Historian in Search of an Identity: Aspects of Early Byzantine Palestine in Sozomen's *Historia Ecclesiastica*," *ZAC* 9 (2006): 367-396 at 368.
12. Sozomen, 7.25.3: Βουθερίχου τοῦ ἡγουμένου τότε τῶν παρ᾽ Ἰλλυριοῖς στρατιωτῶν ἡνίοχος τὸν οἰνοχόον αἰσχρῶς ἰδὼν ἐπείρασε, καὶ συλληφθεὶς ἐν φρουρᾷ ἦν. I would like to thank Professors Apostolos Athanassakis (UCSB) and Nora Chapman (Fresno State) for their comments on this passage.
13. Sozomen, 7.25.3 (continued): ἐπισήμου δὲ ἱπποδρομίας ἐπιτελεῖσθαι μελλούσης ὡς ἀναγκαῖον εἰς τὴν ἀγωνίαν ὁ Θεσσαλονικέων δῆμος ἐξῄτει ἀφίεσθαι· ὡς δὲ οὐδὲν ἤνυεν, εἰς χαλεπὴν κατέστη στάσιν καὶ τελευταῖον τὸν Βουθερίχαν ἀνεῖλε. Migne, *PG*.
14. See recently, Hartmut Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Grossen zu Theodosius II: Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistoriken Socrates, Sozomenus, und Theodoret* (Göttingen, 1996), 225-290, and Noel Lenski, "Were Valentinian, Valens, and Jovian Confessors before Julian the Apostate?" *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 6 (2002): 253-76.
15. Argov, "Church Historian," 372-375.
16. On the famous law school, see Linda Jones Hall, *Roman Berytus: Beirut in Late Antiquity* (London, 2004). On Sozomen in Constantinople, see Leppin, "Church Historians," 223-224.
17. On Socrates, see further T. Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople* (Ann Arbor, 1997), especially 20 and 100, on Sozomen's use of Socrates. For Sozomen's use of Rufinus, see Argov, "Church Historian," 367-368, 382; van Deun, "Church Historians," 163; and Leppin, "Church Historians," 228. Scholars of Patristics might contemplate some variety in titles of articles.
18. Sozomen, *HE* 1.1.13-14.
19. T. Urbainczyk, "Observations on the Differences between the Church Histories of Socrates and Sozomen," *Historia* 46 (1997): 353-373 at 359-362.

20. On Butheric's rank, see A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey* (Norman, 1964), 169 (hereafter *LRE*); Alexander Demandt, "Magister Militum," in *RE*, supp. 12 (Stuttgart, 1970): col. 553-790 at 717; *PLRE* I, "Buthericus," 166. On the significance of the battle of Adrianople, see A. Ferrill, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation* (New York, 1986), 63.
21. See Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford, 1976). See also descriptions by Ammianus (15.5.34 and 15.7.2).
22. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Modern Library Edition), 2: 33-34.
23. Theodoret, *HE* 5.17. Rufinus, *HE* 11. 18 also describes the thirty-day law.
24. On late antique communication and transportation, see Jones, *LRE*, 830-834 and 841-844.
25. Current average winter temperatures in Thessalonica are in the 30s and low 40s Fahrenheit and the temperature in the late fourth century was probably not too different. For studies on paleoclimatology, see T. J. Crowley and G. R. North, *Paleoclimatology* (Oxford, 1991), and, of course, L. A. Frakes, *Climates through Geologic Time* (New York, 1979). While such temperatures do not deter mid-western fans from North American football games, it must be allowed that our winter clothing is much warmer than that which existed in antiquity. On the marble seats of the hippodrome in Thessalonica, see Michael Vickers, "The Hippodrome at Thessaloniki," *Journal of Roman Studies* 62 (1972): 25-32. On locations for chariot racing in general, see J. H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing* (Berkeley, 1986).
26. *CTh* 9.40.13.
27. T. Mommsen suggested in his edition of the *Codex Theodosianus*; followed by Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code* (Princeton, 1952), 257 n. 22. See further, Jones, *LRE,* 169. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 322 n. 108, clearly shows how it must date from 390. For an alternate explanation, see R. Malcolm Errington, "The Praetorian Prefectures of Virius Nicomachus Flavianus," *Historia* 61 (1992): 439-461 at 448-453.
28. On the process of law making in the late empire, see Jill Harries, "The Roman Imperial Quaestor from Constantine to Theodosius II," *Journal of Roman Studies* 78 (1988): 148-172.
29. Although A. Vecchio, "La strage di Tessalonica," in Sergio Felici, ed., *"Humanitas" classica e "sapientia" Cristiana* (Rome, 1992), 115-144, attempts to date the massacre to 389.
30. For standard view, see, among others, S. L. Greenslade, *Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius* (London, 1954), 77. See further, Rufinus, *HE* 11. 18.
31. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 320.
32. Chester D. Hartranft, trans., *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen*, 394.
33. Thomas Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* (Oxford, 1899), 179-180, on riot.
34. Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, trans. G. C. Hansen (Turnhout, 2004), 4 vols.
35. James F. Loughlin, "St. Ambrose," *Catholic Encyclopedia* 1 (New York, 1913), 383-388 at 386, states only that the "seditious Thessalonians had killed the emperor's officials." S. L. Greenslade, *Church and State,* 77, briefly discusses

the riot and killing of Butheric (and uses a copy of Anthony Van Dyck's painting of the confrontation between Ambrose and Theodosius as fly leaf), but does not touch the sexual aspect.

36. N. Q. King, *The Emperor Theodosius and the Establishment of Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1960), 68.
37. C.W.R. Larson, "Theodosius and the Thessalonian Massacre Revisted—Yet Again," *Studia Patristica* 10 (1970): 297-301, on the problem (an analysis with which McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 315-316 agrees); J. Curran, "From Jovian to Theodosius," in Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey, *Cambridge Ancient History: The Late Empire, A.D. 337-425*, vol. 13 (Cambridge, 1998), 108, says only that there was a dispute over the detention of a charioteer; R. Malcolm Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius* (Chapel Hill, 2006), 243, states there was "a riot connected with the games." Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, 2002), 352-353, interprets the cause to be hostility to Gothic officers. Jones, *LRE,* 169, merely says Butheric was lynched. Only Otto Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt,* vol. 5 (Berlin, 1913), 229, and McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 317, allow that a charioteer made sexual advances to the cup-bearer. See also treatment of F. Kolb, "Der Bußakt von Mailand: zum Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche in der Spätantike," in H. Boockmann, K. Jürgensen, G. Stoltenberg, eds., *Geschichte und Gegenwart: Festschr. f. K.-D. Erdmann* (Neumünster 1980), 41-74.
38. Constantin Hohenlohe, *Ursprung und Zweck der Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum* (Vienna, 1935), 11-12; Wilhelm Ensslin, *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Theodosius d. Gr.* (Munich, 1953), 67; and Alexander Demandt, *Die Spätantike* (Munich, 1989), 133 n. 29; Richard Klein, *Roma Versa per Aevum: Ausgewählte Schriften zur heidnischen und christlichen Spätantike*, ed. R. von Haehling and Klaus Scherberich (Hildesheim, 2002), 277-278. I am currently writing a book-length study of the *Collatio* or *Lex Dei*. The Latin text reads: Coll. 5.3.1. *Hoc quidem iuris est: mentem tamen legis Moysi imperatoris Theodosii constitutio ad plenum secuta cognoscitur. idem Theodosius: Impp[p]. Valentinianus Theodosius et Arcadius Augg[g]. ad Orientium vicarium urbis Romae: Non patimur urbem Romam virtutum omnium matrem diutius effeminati in viris pudoris contaminatione foedari et agreste illud a priscis conditoribus robur fracta molliter plebe tenuatum convicium saeculis vel conditorum inrogare vel principum, Orienti k[arissime] ac iuc[undissime] nobis. 2. laudanda igitur experientia tua omnes, quibus flagitiosus luxus est virile corpus muliebriter constitutum alieni sexus damnare patientia nihilque discretum habere cum feminis occupatos, ut flagitii poscit inmanitas, atque omnibus eductos, pudet dicere, virorum lupanaribus spectante populo flammis vindicibus expiabit, ut universi intellegant sacrosanctum cunctis esse debere hospitium virilis animae nec sine summo supplicio alienum expetisse sexum qui suum turpiter perdidisset. Prop. pr(idie). id. Maias Romae in atrio Minervae.*
39. On the dating, see D. Liebs, *Jurisprudenz im spätantiken Italien* (Berlin, 1987), 167-168; Robert M. Frakes, "The Religious Identity and Purpose of the Compiler of the *Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum* or *Lex Dei*," in Robert M. Frakes and Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, eds., *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity* (Toronto, 2006), 134-135.

40. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 234 n. 3; Errington, "Praetorian Prefectures of Virius Nicomachus Flavianus," 453-454.
41. See, respectively, Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 234; Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (Madison, 1992), 109; Amidon, *Rufinus*, 101 n. 31; and McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 317.
42. For homosexuality in the Roman world, see J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago, 1980); D. Dalla, *"Ubi Venus Mutatur": Omosessualità e Diritto nel Mondo Romano* (Milan, 1987); S. Lilja, *Homosexuality in Republican and Augustan Rome* (Helsinki, 1983); D. Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago, 1988).
43. A. Berger, "Lex Scatinia (Scantinia)," *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia, 1953), 559, dates it to 159 BCE. The account of the incident leading to this law is garbled by Valerius Maximus, 6.1.7, since Scantinius must have been the tribune who proposed the law to the *Concilium Plebis* (which had the power to make binding laws after the *Lex Hortensia* of 287 BCE), not the perpetrator of the crime. For an innovative view of this law, see C. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* (Oxford, 1999), 120-124. See also the interesting comments of J. Duncan Cloud, "A Philologist Looks at the 'Lex Scantinia,'" in *Iuris Vincula: Studi in Onore di Mario Talamanca* (Naples, 2001), 2: 201-225.
44. See Cicero, *Ad Familiares*, 8.12.3; Juvenal, *Sat.* 2.43-47. Suetonius, *Domitian* 3, states that Domitan actually enforced the law. For a still useful modern overview, see Lilja, *Homosexuality in Republican and Augustan Rome*, 112-121. For the history of the Mann Act (or White Slave Traffic Act of 1910), see David G. Langum, *Crossing Over the Line: Legislating Morality and the Mann Act* (Chicago, 1994).
45. Prudentius, *Peristephanon Liber*, 10.201-205; for further on Ganymede and Jupiter, see Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 1.70 and 1.274.
46. Gibbon, 2:33; Errington, "Praetorian Prefectures of Virius Nicomachus Flavianus," 453-454.
47. For fine as punishment, see Quintilian, *Inst. Or.,* 4.2.69.
48. *Institutes* 4.18.4: *Item lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis, quae non solum temeratores alienarum nuptiarum gladio punit, sed etiam eos qui cum masculis infandam libidinem exercere audent. sed eadem lege Iulia etiam stupri flagitium punitur, cum quis sine vi vel virginem vel viduam honeste viventem stupraverit. poenam autem eadem lex irrogat peccatoribus, si honesti sunt, publicationem partis dimidiae, bonorum, si humiles, corporis coercitionem cum relegatione.*
49. Errington, "Praetorian Prefectures," 454 (to be fair to Errington, he is one of the few scholars to have seen that previous answers do not work).
50. For definition of *iniuria*, see Berger, "Iniuria," *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 502.
51. See *CJ* 9.35.1 under Severus Alexander; *CJ*. 9.35.7 and 8 under Diocletian.
52. *CTh* 9.7.3: *Impp. Constantius et Constans aa. ad populum. Cum vir nubit in feminam, femina viros proiectura quid cupiat, ubi sexus perdidit locum, ubi scelus est id, quod non proficit scire, ubi venus mutatur in alteram formam, ubi amor quaeritur nec videtur, iubemus insurgere leges, armari iura gladio ultore, ut exquisitis poenis subdantur infames,*

qui sunt vel qui futuri sunt rei. Dat. prid. non. dec. Mediolano, proposita Romae XVII kal. ianuar. Constantio III et Constante II aa. conss.

53. For a comprehensive overview of the Ganymede tradition, see P. Friedländer, "Ganymedes," *RE* 7 (Stuttgart, 1910): col. 737-749.
54. Argov, "Church Historian," 373.
55. S. Williams and G. Friell, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay* (New Haven, 1994), 68.
56. Ammianus, 31.9.5 on the Taifali. For arguments on origins of the Taifali, see P. Heather and J. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool, 1991), 60 n. 1. and H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, Thomas J. Dunlap, trans. (Berkeley, 1988), 91-92.
57. On Antioch, see R. Browning, "The Riot of A.D. 387 in Antioch: The Role of the Theatrical Claques in the Later Empire," *Journal of Roman Studies* 42 (1952): 13-20; on all these crises, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan,* 291-315.
58. For a famous description of the interactions between power and force, see E. Luttwack, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, 1976).
59. For instance, there is no mention of the massacre in Zosimus' history, which suggests the strong probability that it was not in Eunapius' history. Although Ammianus' narrative ends with events in 378, he occasionally alludes to later events and he too says nothing about the massacre (and praises Theodosius at 29.6.15 as *princeps postea perspectissimus*).

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3

CALMING AN ANGRY ENEMY: ATTILA, LEO I, AND THE DIPLOMACY OF AMBIGUITY, 452

Michael Blodgett

In 452 Attila, the king of the Huns, found himself in a quandary. He had invaded Italy, but plague and military defeat had made it impossible for him to secure the land. He needed a face-saving reason for withdrawing. He found this in the arrival of a Roman embassy that included Pope Leo I.[1] Christian bishops had, as Hal Drake once pointed out to me, been active in secular politics long before Leo's meeting with Attila. But what did Leo's presence mean for Attila? According to Jordanes (who was probably drawing on a contemporary account by Priscus), after he met with a Roman embassy that happened to include Pope Leo, Attila accepted some kind of truce with the Western Empire and withdrew to the Danube.[2]

Attila had apparently been intending to invade Italy since as early as 450, when he had received a request for help from the western Roman empress Honoria.[3] In 451 he had been forced to invade Gaul in order to secure his western flank from the threat of Visigothic attack. He succeeded, though largely because of the providential death of the Visigothic king Theodoric rather than because of any military genius of his own. In 452, then, he could apply direct military pressure in support of Honoria against the western Roman empire in Italy.

Why then did Attila choose to leave Italy in 452? A variety of practical reasons have traditionally been offered to explain why Attila needed to abandon the Italian campaign, including an outbreak of plague in his army and action by the Eastern Roman Empire against his possessions on the Danube.[4] Yet Attila clung rather tenaciously to his conquests in Italy until the meeting with the delegation from Rome, which included, in addition to Pope Leo, the senators Trygetius and Gennadius Avienus.[5] It is the

composition of this embassy that was key to convincing Attila to leave Italy. Within the context of Hun society, Attila had established a unique relationship with the divine. Simply to withdraw from Italy, no matter how desperate his situation had become, was unacceptable. The evidence suggests that, at a personal level, Attila needed respect and recognition from Rome. The composition of the Roman embassy, consisting as it did of a senior religious representative and two senior politicians, provided Attila with a reason he needed to withdraw without losing face.

In order to understand the importance of Pope Leo in the embassy of 452 we must first understand Attila's identity in Hun terms. Attila appears to have been perceived—and to have perceived himself—as semi-divine, or at the very least as having a unique relationship with the divine. This perception stemmed not from his position as Hun king but rather from the belief that he had been chosen by the divine through the mechanism of what Priscus was told the Huns understood as the sword of Mars:

> Although he [Attila] was by nature always self-assured, his confidence was increased by the finding of the sword of Mars, which is held sacred amongst the Scythian kings. . . . [Attila] was pleased by this gift and, since he was a high-spirited man, he concluded that he had been appointed ruler of the whole world and that through the sword of Mars he had been granted invincibility in war.[6]

This story had apparently made its way back to Ravenna. In 449 Priscus, on an embassy to Attila with Maximinus, met Constantiolus, a Roman living in Hun territory. Constantiolus confirmed this story.[7] The two reports, taken together, offer insight into Attila's view of himself. First, they indicate that Attila believed the divine had chosen him for some unique destiny. More important, Constantiolus' comments, assuming they were accurately recorded by Priscus, suggest that Attila's semi-divine status was known to at least some Romans and perhaps even accepted.

Regardless of what the sword of Mars might have meant to Attila personally, it is important for us to understand what it meant ideologically. Attila's status as king of the Huns was, as late as 449, insecure at best. Before 445 he had ruled the Hun kingdom jointly with his brother Bleda. Priscus makes it clear that after Attila murdered Bleda he had to impose his rule on those parts of the kingdom formerly ruled by his brother.[8] Potential rivals had also fled to Constantinople. Even as late as 449 Attila could still bitterly complain that some of these were being sheltered by the eastern Roman government.[9]

Attila would thus have benefited from some ideological support for his regime.[10] Warfare was a key consideration of the Hun elite. We have, for instance, Priscus' account of the Greek merchant who had been captured by the Huns at Viminacium and who had then made himself a member of the Hun elite through his courage and skill in battle.[11] This incident suggests that skill in warfare was a key element in Hun society because it brought both wealth and status. In turn, there are very important implications for ruling such a society. Attila could have ruled through force, but doing so was only possible as long as he maintained the greatest potential for force within Hun society.[12]

Given the inability of force to control a warrior elite and given the presence of individuals in the kingdom who posed a political threat to Attila, the sword of Mars was vital to maintaining Attila's authority. It provided him with a connection to the divine both as a ruler and as a warrior. It was an association that none of his subordinates, no matter how powerful they grew, could claim, and thus for Attila it was a source of power independent of his subordinates.

The date Attila received the sword of Mars is not entirely clear. He must have received it prior to 449, for this is the year Constantiolus related the story of its finding to Priscus. Whether Attila received the sword before or after the murder of Bleda in 445, however, cannot be determined. It seems more likely that he received it after Bleda's death. After all, it is unlikely that he would have had to force Bleda's subjects to submit to his rule if he had been in possession of the sword (and the authority that went along with it). Of course, this is impossible to prove definitively. One date, however, is certain: by the time Attila received Honoria's request for aid in 450—a request that prompted his invasion of both Gaul and Italy—he was in possession of the sword of Mars.

Did Attila's subjects think of him as semi-divine? The evidence is not without ambiguity, but we gather that they did. For instance, Priscus relates an incident from the embassy of 449 in which the Roman Vigilas compared Attila to a man while comparing the Emperor Theodosius II to a god. This comparison offended the Hun representatives Edeco and Orestes, who had to be mollified with gifts.[13] Were the Huns angry that the Romans had subordinated Attila to Theodosius or that they had denied his divinity? The text is unclear on this point, but it is clear that the Huns were angry at Vigilas' comments. This incident was brought up again by Priscus to explain Attila's refusal to see the Roman embassy when it arrived at his camp.[14] Once again, however, Priscus is frustratingly vague—did he mean that the Romans had offended Attila by subordinating him to Theodosius or by denying his divinity? Either explanation is possible.

We do know that Attila's claim to divinity was known to the peoples around the Huns. For instance, after the defeat of the Akatziri, Attila offered the king of a neighboring tribe, one Kouridachus, a share in ravaging them. Kouridachus, believing Attila's offer as cover for an attempt to seize and execute him, refused, claiming that "it was hard for a man to come into the sight of a god."[15] Kouridachus might have been using Attila's divinity as a ploy to avoid contact, nevertheless, it was apparently an acceptable excuse for avoiding Attila's presence.

The reactions of Edeco and Orestes combined with Kouridachus' response to Attila's offer suggest that Attila viewed himself as having some unique relationship with the divine. Constantiolus' comments also suggest that at least some Romans accepted that Attila had some unique relationship with the divine. The evidence for Attila himself is less equivocal. If we can trust Priscus, Attila saw the recovery of the sword of Mars as a sign of, if not his own divinity, then certainly divine favor and support.

It should also be noted that there is a strong tradition of shamanism among central Asian nomads.[16] Given that the Huns had emerged from central Asia and possibly contained a Turkish population,[17] one would expect to see shamans among the Huns. Certainly the shaman played a key role in central Asian nomadism, determining such actions as choosing auspicious days for battle or warding off evil. Although unusual, it was not impossible for the local shaman to also become a tribal chief.[18] None of the individuals Priscus met while at the Hun court seem to have played the role of Hun shaman. This does not necessarily mean that shamans did not exist among the Huns, only that in the political debate between Attila and Constantinople they were not employed, and hence Priscus had no chance to meet one. Nonetheless, the idea that the chief can also be the shaman must be considered in Attila's case.

Jordanes relates an incident during the siege of Aquileia which suggests that Attila might well have been a shaman. After a series of frustrations, Attila faced a mutiny among his army. He was able to quell this mutiny when storks were seen leaving the city, a sign Attila interpreted as foreshadowing the fall of the city. His army apparently accepted his interpretation and captured the city.[19] Maenchen-Helfen would reject this story as a Hun version of a Chinese tradition.[20] Given that Attila's world was one in which the divine was believed to be directly active, this story cannot, *pace* Maenchen-Helfen, be dismissed.[21]

A particularly interesting aspect of this story is the importance of birds in intimating the will of the divine. Marjorie Balzer, in an extensive study of central Asian shamans, notes the importance of the bird motif in central Asian shamanism.[22] There is, admittedly, a difference between

interpreting the movements of birds and connecting to the divine through them. Yet we have no idea how Jordanes heard the story of Attila at Aquileia. We cannot know whether the observer was a Hun or Roman. Or whether Hun actions filtered through Roman perceptions, resulting in the story we have today. We do know that Priscus was in the east with Maximinus at this time, so he certainly was not an eyewitness to this event, and thus he cannot be Jordanes' ultimate source.[23] The passage strongly suggests that Attila was acting as a shaman, although whether he was interpreting the movements of birds or whether a Roman misunderstood a Hun ceremony involving birds cannot be determined. The implication is that Attila was either a shaman or prepared to act in a shaman-like manner when the situation demanded.

Another factor complicates our understanding of Attila's actions in 452: his demand for respect. Attila's interactions with Constantinople suggest that he wanted the Romans to show him proper respect, or at least a certain level of respect. In 449, for instance, the presence of Maximinus as ambassador seems to have offended Attila and his court. On this occasion, Priscus tells us that after he had announced the arrival of Maximinus, Attila ordered him to return to Maximinus to ask "which man of consular rank the Romans were sending as ambassador to Attila."[24] Attila clearly felt that he deserved a certain level of recognition, and Maximinus appears to have failed to measure up to his standards. Attila may have had a point. As early as the reign of Attila's predecessor Rua, the Romans had been prepared to appoint either Plinthas or Dionysius as ambassadors to the Huns. Both men were generals and ex-consuls.[25] On Rua's death Plinthas was dispatched to meet with Attila and Bleda.[26] To settle the crisis of 447 Constantinople sent Senator, who held consular rank, as ambassador to Attila.[27] Although our evidence is scantier for Ravenna, the embassy sent by the western Roman court to Attila in 449 included the comes Romulus.[28] All of this evidence suggests Attila expected ambassadors of a certain social status.

Before the invasion of Italy, then, there are already several key elements in Attila's ideological stance. The first of these is the sign of divine favor he drew from the sword of Mars. Second is the need to maintain the loyalty of his warriors by providing them with tangible rewards. As Rudi Lindner has put it, a "tribal chief's power, the assurance his commands will be obeyed, rests upon his success in serving the interests of his tribesmen."[29] The example of the Greek merchant from Viminacium turned Hun warrior is clear—Attila needed to secure victory for his subordinates. Thirdly, Attila insisted on a certain amount of respect based on his status. These are powerful normative factors that need to be considered in any analysis of Attila's actions in 452.

In the summer of 452 Attila descended through the Julian Alps—the Ljubljana Gap—into the Po Valley. Having breached the Julian Alps Attila placed Aquileia under siege, at which time the incident with the storks occurred. After sacking Aquileia, Attila led his army into the valley of the Po, seizing, among other cities, Milan. There Attila saw a painting depicting Roman emperors with dead Scythians lying at their feet. Apparently offended, he found an artist and had the painting recast, with himself on a throne and the Roman emperors standing before him pouring gold at his feet.[30] Attila's reaction to the painting in Milan affirms just how important respect was to him. If we return to Timothy Earle's definition of ideology as public presentation, then the presentation of Roman superiority in the Milan painting could be seen not just as disrespectful but as subversive in that it undermined Attila's successes.[31]

Having secured the Po Valley, why not march on Rome? This would have been the logical next step in Attila's campaign. The record suggests, however, that Attila was under pressure from his subordinates to avoid Rome at all costs. According to Jordanes, his generals reminded Attila that the Goth Alaric had died after seizing Rome, and they feared that the same thing would happen to Attila. Attila's response was to vacillate until a Roman embassy found him in the neighborhood of ancient Ambuleium.[32] The embassy arrived at a time when Attila was already under significant pressure from his subordinates to abandon the march on Rome. In addition to the question of marching on Rome, there were other factors that made Attila's position in Italy untenable. According to Hydatius, a plague had broken out among the Huns, and Marcian, who had become the Eastern Roman emperor on the death of Theodosius II in 450, had sent a force from Constantinople to threaten the Huns' possessions along the Danube.[33]

So Attila had good reason for abandoning the Italian campaign, at least for 452, yet he seems to have delayed a withdrawal until after receiving a Roman embassy. Therefore, the composition and actions of the embassy need to be considered in depth.

Prosper Tiro gives us the clearest view of the embassy, although it is colored by his support of Pope Leo.[34] Attila's response to the embassy, and particularly to the presence of Pope Leo, is significant. Attila, we are told, "received the whole delegation courteously, and he was so flattered by the presence of the highest priest that he ordered his men to stop the hostilities and, promising peace, returned beyond the Danube."[35] Was the composition of the Roman embassy deliberate? The debate that went on in Rome concerning the embassy, as well as the fact that at least some Romans—witness Constantiolus—had heard the story of the sword of Mars, suggests that the embassy's composition was deliberate.

Furthermore, the contacts between Ravenna and Attila had been extensive, although we cannot guarantee they continued after 450. Certainly one source of information on Attila and his kingdom was the secretary Constantius, who had been assigned to Attila by Aetius.[36] Yet a second potential source existed: Orestes. He is not only identified as a Roman by Priscus but potentially had links to the western Roman court through his father-in-law Romulus.[37]

The Roman embassy had much to offer in terms of respect. First, the presence of two senior politicians. We have seen that deference was a consistent concern of Attila's, even as late as the capture of Milan. More important, however, the presence of the senior religious official in Rome could be interpreted as divine submission on the part of the Romans. Pope Leo need never have intended such submission, and Maenchen-Helfen argues that Leo was present primarily to ransom captives.[38] Nonetheless, Leo's presence could be presented by Attila to the Huns as evidence of divine submission, in turn providing sanction for his actions—including the withdrawal from Italy.

Did Attila's meeting with Leo have greater significance for the Huns than our sources—Priscus, Jordanes, and Prosper Tiro—realized or are prepared to admit? In central Asian shamanism there is a tradition of conflict between shamans, including contests between shamans replacing violence.[39] Within the context of shamanic conflict, Pope Leo's presence could have been magnified out of proportion to his actual mission. It appears that Avienus and Trygetius were present to negotiate with Attila, while Leo was primarily present to ransom Romans captured by the Huns at Aquileia and thereafter.[40] As Otto Maenchen-Helfen points out, however, Leo would have been seen by the Huns as the Roman's head shaman.[41] Moreover, captives were ransomed not by the victorious side but rather by the losers.[42] Leo's actions, no matter how humanitarian their intention, could have been interpreted by the Huns as submission.

Was Attila perceived as winning or losing the Italian campaign? We have already seen that plague had broken out in his army. Furthermore, although breaching the Julian Alps seems to have been relatively easy, the seizure of Aquileia clearly took longer than Attila's army expected. To this we must add Attila's inability to march on Rome. Closely associated with this failure is a basic question of Roman military strategy: Where was Aetius and the western army? Our sources do not tell us, but the logical place for him to station himself would have been the Apennine mountains. There he could both block Attila's march on Rome and, given the relative paucity of good axes of approach in the Apennines, fight Attila on terrain favorable to his army. Plus, Attila needed to deal with the eastern force that had descended on his possessions along the Danube.

Militarily speaking, then, it appears Attila was losing. To admit this, however, by withdrawing unilaterally would have subverted the ideology of the sword of Mars—that he was the world-conquering hero with the unique connection to the divine. Attila's failure in Italy would have called into question his relationship with the divine, not just his military abilities. The presence of Leo, however, offered Attila the opportunity to shift the conflict away from the purely military to the religious, to make the struggle in Italy one of shaman versus shaman. In this battle Attila could claim victory through the mechanism of Leo's ransoming of captives.

Attila, then, had every reason to be thrilled with the composition of the embassy that met him on the banks of the Mincius. In the past he had insisted on receiving respect from the Romans, who had sent senior politicians and ex-consuls—clearly what Attila had demanded on other occasions from Constantinople. The presence of Pope Leo also supported Attila's claim, derived from the sword of Mars, to have a unique relationship with the divine. This does not mean that Attila did not have other reasons for abandoning Italy, including a plague in his army, pressure from his subordinates to withdraw, and attacks on his Danubian possessions by Constantinople. What the Roman embassy of 452 did was provide the normative basis by which the withdrawal of a semi-divine being could be explained to Attila's subjects.

NOTES

1. In explaining Attila's withdrawal from Italy, most historians have concentrated on the impact of practical military factors in his decision. E. A. Thompson, *The Huns* (Oxford, 1996), 156-163, argues for a combination of famine, plague, and attacks along the Danube by the Eastern Roman Empire as being the key reasons for Attila's withdrawal; Arthur Ferrill, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation* (New York, 1986), 150-151, also accepts the trio of famine plague and threat on the Danube as reasons for Attila's withdrawal, as does Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford, 2006), 340-341. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* vol. III, ed. J. B. Bury (Holicong, n.d.), 493-500, argues that Pope Leo's eloquence persuaded Attila to withdraw, though the fact that his army was suffering from plague and a decline of their "martial spirit" in the warm Italian climate contributed to his decision; Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Europe* (Houndmills, 1991, 1999), 86, mentions that Pope Leo might have persuaded Attila to evacuate Italy, but attributes the actual decision to withdraw to practical factors "such as an epidemic." Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns* (Berkeley, 1973), 129-144, admits that Leo had a role in convincing Attila to withdraw but still places the emphasis for his decision on plague, famine, and the threat from the Eastern

Empire to Attila's holdings along the Danube. J. B. Bury, *The Invasion of Europe by the Barbarians* (New York, 1967), 152-153, would completely reject any notion that Pope Leo was a factor in encouraging Attila to withdraw: it is, he comments on p. 153, "unreasonable to suppose that this heathen king would have cared for the thunders or persuasions of the Church" and he prefers plague and famine as reasons for Attila's retreat. The primary sources for this campaign can largely be found in R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire,* vol. 2 (Liverpool, 1983).

2. Jordanes, *Get.* 42, 219-224, in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 311. For the role played by Pope Leo, see Andrew Gillett, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West, 411-533* (Cambridge, 2003), 114-115, who argues that Leo's importance in the embassy was expanded over time at the expense of his secular colleagues.
3. Priscus, *Exc. De Leg. Gent.* 8 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 307-309.
4. See above, n. 1.
5. Prosper Tironis, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1367 in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctores Antiquissimi XI* (hereafter MGH[AA]), ed. Theodor Mommsen (Berlin, 1892 repr. 1961).
6. Jordanes, *Get.* 35, 183, in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 281. It should be noted that a deity the Romans referred to as Mars was important in Scythia at least as early as the first century. According to Pomponius Mela, *Chorographia* II.15, "Mars is the god of all these [Scythian] peoples. To him they dedicate swords and sword belts instead of images and sacrifice human beings instead of animals." For the date of Mela's work see *Pomponius Mela's Description of the World*, trans. F. E. Romer (Ann Arbor, 1998), 1-4. For the archaeological evidence of sword use in the region, see V. N. Kaminsky, "Early Medieval Weapons in the North Caucasus—A Preliminary Review," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 15 (1) (1996): 95-105, and Helmut Nickel, "About the Sword of the Huns and the 'Urepos' of the Steppes," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 7 (1973): 131-142.
7. *Exc. De Leg. Rom.* 3 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians,* 281. Nor would it be unnatural for a good Roman to see the hand of God at work in choosing rulers. For instance, the future emperor Marcian was saved from a murder charge by divine intervention, and his enrollment in the place of a soldier named Augustus presaged, for Romans at least, his future status as emperor. See Evagrius, *HE* 2,1 in ibid., 303, 305.
8. Prosperi Tironis, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1353 in MGH(AA).
9. Priscus, *Exc. De Leg. Rom.* 3 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 257.
10. A good working definition of ideology can be found in Timothy Earle, *How Chiefs Come to Power* (Stanford, 1997), 149, who defines it as "a system of beliefs and ideas presented publicly in ceremonies and other occasions. It is created and manipulated strategically by social segments, most importantly the ruling elite, to establish and maintain positions of social power."
11. Priscus, *Exc. De Leg. Rom.* 3 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 269.
12. See Earle, *Power*, chap. 4, where he rejects the ability of force to maintain (as opposed to create) a viable chiefdom. Particularly at p. 110 he notes that

"warfare does not necessarily institutionalize a political or economic hierarchy."

13. *Exc. De Leg. Rom.* 3 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 247, 249.
14. Ibid., 257.
15. Ibid., 259.
16. Nora K. Chadwick, "Shamanism among the Tatars of Central Asia," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Northern Ireland* 66 (January-July 1936): 75-112.
17. For the Hun arrival in Europe, see Ammianus Marcellinus 31.2.1-12 and Jordanes, *Get.* 24, 123-126, in Blockley, *Classicising Historians,* 223-225. For the presence of Turkish names among the Huns, see Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*, 392-422.
18. Joseph Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46 (1) (June 1986): 20.
19. Jordanes *Get.* 42, 219-224 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 311.
20. *World of the Huns*, 134. Yet even if we assume a relationship between the Hsiung-nu of Chinese history and the Huns, it had been generations since the Huns had been in contact with Chinese civilization. Second, even Maenchen-Helfen, at p. 133, admits that the movements of birds were considered ominous by Greeks, Romans, and Germans.
21. On the presence of omens in the case of the Emperor Marcian, for instance, see n. 6 above.
22. Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, "Flights of the Sacred: Symbolism and Theory in Siberian Shamanism," *American Anthropologist*, n.s. 98 (2) (June, 1996): 306.
23. Priscus, *Exc. De Leg. Gent.* 11 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 323-325.
24. *Exc. De Leg. Rom.* 3 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 283.
25. Priscus, *Exc. De Leg. Rom.* 1 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 225. See also Brian Croke, "Anatolius and Nomus: Envoys to Attila," *Byzantinoslavica* 42 (1981): 159-170.
26. Ibid.
27. Priscus, *Exc. De Leg. Rom.* 2 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 237.
28. Priscus, *Exc. De Leg. Rom.* 3 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 263.
29. Rudi Lindner, "Nomadism, Horses, and Huns," *Past and Present* 92 (1981): 3-19, at 11.
30. *Suda* M 405 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 315.
31. Earle, *Power*, chap. 4.
32. Jordanes, *Get.* 42, 219-24 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 311.
33. *Hydatii Lemici* 154 in MGH(AA).
34. Gillett, *Envoys*, 114-115.
35. Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*, 140, translation of Prosper Tironis, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1367.
36. Priscus, *Exc. de Leg. Rom.* 3 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 263.
37. Ibid.
38. Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*, 141.
39. Chadwick, "Shamanism among the Tatars of Central Asia," 89.
40. Gillett, *Envoys*, 114-115 and 139, where he describes the emphasis on Pope Leo as "misleading exclusiveness."

41. *World of the Huns*, 140.
42. Witness, for instance, the Hun demands to Constantinople over the city of Asemus in 449. In this case, it is very clear—Roman captives among the Huns were to be ransomed while Hun captives were to be released. See Priscus, *Exc. De Leg. Gent.* 3 in Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 237-241.

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4

"PATRES ORPHANORUM": AMBROSE OF MILAN AND THE CONSTRUCTON OF THE ROLE OF THE BISHOP

Michael Proulx

Few images capture an ideal of episcopal authority confronting imperial power in Late Antiquity more than that of Ambrose of Milan's excommunication of the emperor Theodosius I (r. 379-392) for the massacre at Thessalonica in 390.[1] Lionized by church historians nearly a half-century after the fact, Ambrose's episcopal *auctoritas* provided future bishops with a powerful and yet nearly impossible role model to emulate. The concession at Milan would not have been possible had it not been for Ambrose's reputation for confronting imperial abuse of power. That renown was built upon an emerging episcopal self-image after the fall of the usurper-emperor Magnus Maximus (r. 383-388), for it was with Maximus that Ambrose's image of bishops as *patres orphanorum* was first created.

This chapter reexamines Ambrose's role as emissary to Maximus' court in 383 and 386 and argues that his reputation as a defender of Valentinian II (r. 383-392) has been largely overstated, in part because of a misleading account provided by Ambrose himself in his *Letter* 30.[2] Taking their cue from Ambrose himself, subsequent studies have placed the bishop of Milan at the center of events. The influence of H. A. Drake's work, with its creative and insightful revision of conventional interpretations of fourth-century political authority, has particular relevance for this issue.[3] A close reading of the letter provides grounds to diminish Ambrose's role in these events and highlights an alternative explanation for his communication to Valentinian, the authenticity of which has recently become a point of discussion.[4] Rather than an official report from an

emissary to his emperor, *Letter* 30 was a bold initiative that attempted to reach out to the court of Valentinian in order to offer service to it. This chapter argues that Ambrose never served as a key court insider. Rather, he sought to exploit an issue of regional security as leverage to gain direct and regular access to Valentinian. Although such a relationship never materialized, the construction of Ambrose as defender of Valentinian continues to endure.

It was on two occasions with Maximus that Ambrose's reputation as defender of innocents and challenger to imperial will were popularly established.[5] The first occurred in the wake of Maximus' overthrow of Gratian in the summer of 383, and the second took place perhaps in the summer of 386.[6] According to the narratives, in 383 the empress Justina, step-mother to the murdered Gratian, asked Ambrose to defend her twelve-year old son Valentinian II against Maximus and his plans to bring Italy under his control. The association with Justina positioned Ambrose as the sole protector of the descendants of Constantine—no small claim for posterity.[7] And so, through a combination of his diplomatic skills and his shared Nicene orthodoxy with Maximus, in contrast to the Arianism of the Milan court, Ambrose held the usurper at bay and bought vital time for Milan to organize its defenses. Although Maximus pressed Ambrose to support his proposal that the court of the young Valentinian relocate to Trier where he might live under the oversight and guidance of the usurper-emperor "as a son to his father,"[8] Ambrose skillfully stalled by pointing out that the timing of the winter season would not be conducive for the imperial family to make the arduous journey across the Alps, perhaps implying that the boy-emperor would arrive during the following spring. By the time Ambrose returned from Trier, the alpine pass between Italy and the northern provinces was fortified and, according to one modern interpretation, Ambrose was praised as a savior for securing the safety of the court in Milan.[9]

If the 383 mission's intent was to stall Maximus, the embassy in 386 was probably commissioned to serve a dual purpose: to communicate peace, when tensions flared over religious policies in Milan, and to retrieve the body of Gratian. Great concern was registered in Milan when Maximus issued a letter threatening to defend the city's beleaguered Nicene community over the Portian basilica affair.[10] The events of Easter week in 386 had forced a week-long standoff between imperial troops of Valentinian and Ambrose's congregation.[11] The pro-Arian court eventually withdrew its claim over the church and saw it as prudent to respond to Maximus through Ambrose, who was to offer his assurance that peace and harmony was restored in Milan. The mission was popularly depicted by Ambrose's hagiographer Paulinus of Milan with the added

fiction that Ambrose excommunicated Maximus.[12] These representations, however, are inconsistent with historical events.

Analysis of Ambrose's role in both missions places the bishop at the center of events. Hans von Campenhausen argued that, while the nature of Ambrose's role in the mission of 383 was initially that of an envoy, he led the operation to obstruct Maximus' plans for invading Italy.[13] Subsequent studies follow suit by interpreting Ambrose as a key figure in defense of Valentinian's government.[14] John Matthews judged that Ambrose performed a vital function by delaying Maximus with promises to secure the delivery of Valentinian, while buying precious time for Milan to fortify its northern defenses.[15] Neil McLynn holds that Ambrose went to Trier to "buy time for the loyalists in Milan" with the intent to commit outright fraud against Maximus, although the threat from Maximus was probably more perceived than real.[16]

This narrative presents a striking array of alliances and reveals the desperate situation caused by Maximus' usurpation. The Empress Justina, mother to Valentinian, was a devout Arian; Bauto, the *magister militum* under Gratian who was now acting chief military commander for Valentinian, was a barbarian pagan general of the old guard; Macedonius, the *magister officiorum* under Gratian, was a religiously tolerant administrator who had supported the condemned ascetic bishop Priscillian.[17] Although these individuals represented powerful sectors of opposition to the bishop, Ambrose showed he was capable of putting his differences aside for the greater good of the imperial court which he served. Pairing the Nicene Ambrose with the Arian Valentinian court does underscore the vested interests of an eclectic court of adversaries. Other considerations suggest Ambrose's cooperation may not have been entirely altruistic.

A successful defense of the child-emperor's independence might give Ambrose access to the new court forming in Milan. As Palanque noted, Ambrose's ties to the house of Valentinian, which were formed through his favorable dealings with Gratian, were disrupted by Maximus' usurpation; therefore, answering the call to represent a young Valentinian provided him a golden opportunity.[18] It was a matter of practical survival during the high tide of chaos after Gratian's murder.[19] A successful mission could neutralize his detractors in Milan, while the boost in his political clout could thwart competitors like pagan senators and Arian sympathizers who sought to influence the boy-emperor.[20] The situation appeared dire as elite quarters scrambled to put differences aside in order to support an imperial apparatus caught completely off guard. All interests were focused on the singular goal of maintaining the imperial independence of Milan for the purpose of keeping the imperial apparatus they relied on and maintaining valuable access to the emperor they knew.[21]

Accordingly, political opportunity rather than any genuine loyalty to the Valentinian court might have played a vital role in Ambrose's decision to become involved in uncertain affairs of this magnitude.

Similar assessments of Ambrose's later role in 386 propose ulterior motives. With the initial threat of Maximus in 383 eased, the possibility Maximus might intercede on behalf of Milan's Nicene community over the Portian basilica affair had become a pressing concern. The mechanisms for peace deployed by the Valentinian court involved using the bishop for their benefit. Three key points were to be advanced by Ambrose. First, as a fellow Nicene, he could give Maximus his personal assurance that the conflict between Milan's Nicene community and the pro-Arian Milan court had come to a peaceful resolution. Second, to ease tensions between Trier and Milan, Ambrose would have to resolve any ill feelings caused three years previously by his promise to deliver Valentinian to the usurper. Maximus, it could be argued by Ambrose, was being unreasonable in demanding the entire Milan court move to Trier.[22] Valentinian could not be expected to subject himself to another's authority. Third, as a sign of good will to seal the new peace of 386, Maximus would be required to return the remains of Gratian.[23] This much of the scenario appears highly probable. Yet there is another view.

The mission could also provide the Milan court with an opportunity to test Ambrose for any perceived collusion with Maximus.[24] Given the bitter events over the Portian basilica, members of the Milan court may have had reasons for being suspicious of the shared orthodoxy between Ambrose and Maximus. If Ambrose could obtain the body of Gratian, he would gain favor and would prove he was no threat to Valentinian.[25] An additional benefit for the court would be to send Ambrose to Trier to remove him from his popular base of support in Milan. If the mission failed, Ambrose's popularity would be checked and he could be blamed for causing war should Maximus make good his threat to interfere in Milan's affairs.[26] From Ambrose's standpoint, the mission provided an opportunity to show the court his faithful intentions by reestablishing harmony between Milan's Nicene community and the pro-Arian Valentinian court.[27] Ambrose's eagerness to journey once again to the north expressed his desire to heal the fractures that had developed between the Valentinian court and himself over the previous two years—all caused, in part, by his successful campaign against pagan parties at court and his opposition to the court's attempts to establish a place of worship for Arians in Milan.[28] As such, the mission of 386 had much riding on it. Valentinian needed to respond to Maximus' direct threat to intervene into Milan's affairs, and the court saw an opportunity to test Ambrose. Ambrose, on the other hand, took the opportunity to defend

himself and restore his standing with the Milan court. Though these observations of fourth-century triangular politics broaden our understanding of the complex nature of survival in imperial Roman politics, they present an exaggerated image of Ambrose. Situating the events in the proper context will rebalance that image.

Ambrose's report of the 386 mission in *Letter* 30 is the basis for the lion's share of these reconstructions. In thirteen paragraphs Ambrose describes in detail a single conversation with Maximus. On its face, the narrative appears straightforward. After Ambrose protested the way he had been received as a "commoner" (30.2), Maximus accused Ambrose and Valentinian's *magister militum*, Bauto, of "deception" in the earlier mission of 383, which entailed a promise from Ambrose to bring Valentinian to Trier (30.4).[29] The bishop defended his actions by citing his episcopal duties as *pater orphanorum* interceding to protect women and children (30.5), his obligation to serve his emperor (30.6), and Maximus' hostile stance toward Italy (30.8). Ambrose then challenged Maximus to return the body of Gratian (30.9-10), and he defended Valentinian's court for seeking aid from Maximus' eastern rival and champion of Nicene orthodoxy, Theodosius (30.11). As Ambrose explained in the final lines, he was expelled from Trier for refusing communion with other bishops presumably gathered there for the trial of the Priscillianists.[30] The letter closes with a warning that Maximus intended to wage war against Milan (30.13). Even this brief summary is sufficient to show that Ambrose was being less than forthright; his expulsion and blunt warning to prepare for war signaled that the mission was a failure.

Letter 30 is remarkable. Its pugnacious and bombastic tone shows Ambrose in complete control of the meeting. In contrast, Maximus appears as a volatile tyrant whose frustration explodes through accusations of fraud and trickery. But the depiction of usurper bested by bishop is artificial. It has been suggested that Ambrose was deliberate in his efforts to distance himself from any association with Maximus; the letter's tone and detailed dialogue emphasizes Ambrose's loyalty to Valentinian. The claim that he was "forced" to contend with the usurper-emperor hints that Ambrose enjoyed no close relationship with Maximus and that the usurper distrusted him. So direct was this effect that Palanque concluded Ambrose took pleasure in all opportunities to revive conflicts with Maximus to either highlight the strength of Valentinian's position since 383 or to raise his own personal status.[31] Holmes Dudden similarly stated that Ambrose intentionally sought confrontation with Maximus to discredit talk of conspiracy between the two.[32]

Recently Daniel Williams has revised the interpretation of the letter. In his view the stern confrontation with Maximus lacks any credibility and

was merely drama intended for Valentinian's court, which had lost its confidence in the bishop. As a result, Ambrose intended to stoke the rivalry between Milan and Trier in order to deflect Valentinian's attention from himself and his congregation.[33] As a matter of practical survival, Ambrose's letter serves as a diversion to position himself between both courts, thereby not creating an enemy in Maximus because the usurper had presented himself as an ally in Ambrose's struggles with the pro-Arian Valentinian court [34] In other words, Ambrose had Maximus to thank for his victory over the Valentinian court in the Portian basilica conflict. It would not make sense to sever relations with such an ally. As a kind of double-agent, then, Ambrose may have deftly played both courts against each another. Against Valentinian, Ambrose publicly promoted and defended the orthodox community of Milan. With Maximus, Ambrose raised the usurper-emperor as a straw man to secure himself against adversaries in Milan.

The issue of *Letter* 30's authenticity has recently reemerged. Norbert Dörner's provocative study suggests that Ambrose's unusual tone in the letter was justified; the bishop was compelled to address Maximus directly concerning allegations of collusion emanating from Trier.[35] J.W.H.G. Liebeschuetz rejects this argument on grounds that the concerns of 383 were moot in 386, restating convention that the letter's undiplomatic tone makes it problematic to accept as authentic in current form.[36] Stressing Ambrose's aesthetic interests and his desire to publish his correspondence in the *Collectio,* Liebeschuetz interprets the letter in the context of late antique letter-writing.[37] But the letter's placement in a larger corpus of correspondence does not invalidate the overall worthiness of the account.[38] Furthermore, objection to the letter's authenticity based purely on literary tone is problematic.

The presumption that Ambrose would not dare speak to an emperor as the letter shows can be explained in a number of ways. First, if Dörner is correct that Ambrose was the victim of a whisper campaign initiated by Trier to foment tensions in Milan between the Valentinian court and its rival bishop, Ambrose had no choice as a matter of survival but to confront Maximus publicly. It explains the letter's temperament. Because Ambrose so clearly defended himself at *Ep.* 30.7, the gravity of the matter should not be overshadowed by the rhetoric.[39] Rumors of collusion, well known in Milan, gave Ambrose the cover he needed to set the record straight, in public, in a spirited manner. Second, given Maximus' position from 383 to 386, the usurper-emperor would have been bound by protocol and a need to impress and solidify support among the ecclesiastics gathered at Trier, a vital underpinning to gaining and maintaining influence in the Gallic provinces.[40] *Paideia* dictated Maximus

play his part as the restrained and generous emperor. Confrontation on Ambrose's part for a perceived violation of etiquette would be justified and understood given the suggested collusion with the usurper.[41] Ambrose could afford to be bold, even audacious, because he had the moral high ground in defending his honor while requesting Gratian's remains.

Ambrose, then, could risk openly pressing Maximus on the issues. Maximus could do little in response. Anything more severe than expulsion from Trier would be an uncertain move, for the usurper-emperor stood to lose much. For three years he had committed himself to making peace with Milan in accordance with his negotiations with Theodosius. On the ecclesiastical front, Maximus had vigorously promoted himself as defender of Nicene orthodoxy in his realm and he could not risk offending and alienating Milan's Nicene community, which he sought to charm. Offending their bishop would destroy any attempt to gain their future support, should the expansion into Italy occur. Thus, it appears Maximus, not Ambrose, was bound by the protocol of his new imperial authority to win over and impress his subjects with benevolent power.

Third, open confrontation could also serve as a critical attack on the Gallic church. Ambrose's public demonstration was in part directed against the episcopal subjection to imperial authority at Trier. By speaking openly, Ambrose exercised the kind of episcopal independence all bishops secretly desired but few dared show in public before their emperors. Ambrose could afford such a display because he was the metropolitan bishop in another imperial city. The display probably caught Maximus off guard. And last, the most significant factor pointing toward authenticity of the letter is Ambrose's non-diplomatic status, for he did not serve in an official capacity. Taking a cue from Dörner and Liebeschuetz that literary forensics can reveal an ancient author's intent, we can parse the text for insight into Ambrose's marginal status, which should help us to understand the problematic nature of the letter's tone.[42]

The choice between Dörner and Liebeschuetz need not be so difficult, as this is a case where both sides are correct. Maximus' interests in Milan are well known.[43] It would be surprising that his agents were not busy building and strengthening ties to Milan by exploiting Ambrose's missteps with Valentinian. Similarly, that Ambrose edited his letters for posterity is undisputable. It is certain that Ambrose rewrote and even added lines in his correspondence to Valentinian. The most significant addition is perhaps the letter's bombshell closing line warning Milan to prepare for war against Maximus.[44] This statement is highly suspect and we must dispense with the notion that Ambrose had the ability to foresee events. Yet Ambrose's rewriting and embellishing does not obscure the letter's

peculiar sections that indicate originality. Concentration on subtleties, tonal changes, and questionable phrases that previous analyses have raised all but ignores the obvious. By Ambrose's own account, the mission was an utter failure—a peculiar admission if Ambrose was concerned about self-promotion in a literary afterlife from beyond the grave. Moreover, it is clear that Valentinian's court was not even interested enough in Ambrose to require a mission report from him. Ambrose himself provides the trace evidence: *Letter* 30 begins with the greeting: "You have had such faith in my former embassy [383] that no report of it was demanded of me."[45] This unusual statement has been largely overlooked. If the situation in 383 was as urgent as presumed, we might expect that the court would have lost no time in debriefing Ambrose, not vice versa.[46] For Milan to allow its own imperial diplomat to linger is revealing.

The ambiguity of Ambrose's status with the Milanese court suggests estrangement and perhaps no direct link at all between the bishop and the imperial administration, demonstrating that he did not serve in a key position as has been traditionally assumed.[47] There is, in fact, no indication that the two sides ever met upon his return from first mission to Trier in 383 and it appears that this letter, written three years later, is the first break in the silence on the topic. Ambrose's opening reference to Valentinian's "faith" in him and "approval" for his part in the mission attempts to convey the perception of closeness to the court, but these are empty assurances. The text suggests a need to explain his actions during the 383 mission, indicating that the period of estrangement continued through 386 when the Portian basilica issue tested both sides. We must remember that Valentinian was age twelve in 383 and would not have had direct control over his court. It is quite likely that Ambrose desired to explain his role in the first mission personally to an older and presumably more involved Valentinian, and not to his court administrators. Such an attempt would neutralize any rumors of suspicious intentions which may have persisted about Ambrose, especially after the humiliation Valentinian suffered as a result of the Portian basilica crisis. The distance in the relationship, however, remained unchanged. With no known indication of Ambrose's supposed celebrity status for helping to save the court from Maximus in 383, one must recognize the probability that he neither saved the court from destruction nor enjoyed any particular elevation as a result.

The bishop's traditional status with Maximus is equally problematic. Maximus' reception of Ambrose as a common envoy on both missions and his rejection of the bishop's request for a private audience (30.2) indicates Ambrose's nominal position. The bishop's defense against misleading Maximus with a promise to deliver Valentinian is in fact a statement that he had no authorization to negotiate terms. The forthright

claim is clear: "I was sent on an embassy of peace . . . It is clear that I could not promise what was not enjoined to me."[48] That Maximus had engaged Ambrose for his influence with Valentinian should be considered a matter of on the spot convenience for Trier, an exchange of niceties that might or might not prove advantageous. The usurper exploited all avenues available to influence the court of Valentinian, and Ambrose presented but one opportunity.

Given the unique circumstances of 383, it now seems that Ambrose was part of an overall diplomatic effort with the limited role of offering salutations and a general message of peace. The tendency to see him as anything more is eclipsed by the flurry of direct diplomatic activity between Milan and Trier. Ambrose himself provides the evidence that the official negotiations between Milan and Trier were conducted apart from his own embassy to Trier in 383.[49] Maximus had sent his own delegation led by the *comes* Victor, who conveyed terms to Milan. A similar embassy was dispatched in like protocol to Theodosius.[50] Victor crossed paths with Ambrose in the alpine passes while the bishop began his journey to Trier (30.9). Subsequently, two separate missions from Milan returned to Trier with an official answer that Valentinian would remain an emperor in his own right.[51] It is likely that both of these missions, not Ambrose's, were definitive factors promising some type of compromise with Maximus in 383. In total, these embassies were part of an overall diplomatic program initiated by all sides.

Further evidence from *Ep.* 30 suggests that Ambrose's position remained unchanged in 386. Before this second mission, Maximus had sent his brother, Marcellinus, to Milan, presumably to deliver the written threat to support Milan's Nicene community in the Portian basilica crisis. Valentinian sent Marcellinus back to Trier with Ambrose on what is the famous second mission of 386.[52] Marcellinus' presence in Ambrose's embassy cannot be ignored, because it is more likely that negotiations went through him thereby explaining why Ambrose was received in the consistory with the general public a second time.[53] Other sources confirm that both courts engaged each other at higher levels in 386. The late fourth-century historian Rufinus of Aquileia reported that Valentinian and Maximus had concluded a truce after Ambrose's mission in 386.[54] Zosimus recorded that on one diplomatic mission Maximus offered military support to Valentinian for use against barbarian tribes on the northern Italian borders.[55] Evidence in a Gallic chronicle of 452 records that the peace between Maximus and Valentinian was influenced by Theodosius, whose recognition of the former ended the latter's hope for aid in case of invasion.[56] What is significant in these accounts is the absence of the bishop of Milan. Grumel's suggestion that Ambrose's skills

as a diplomat were effective beyond his actual participation in later negotiations is not convincing because it assumes Ambrose's position as diplomat too literally.[57] It was probably Theodosius' refusal to insert himself into the affairs between Trier and Milan, not Ambrose's efforts in 386, which triggered an agreement of peace between Maximus and Valentinian. Like Maximus in the mission of 383, the Milan court in 386 considered Ambrose but one opportunity to exploit for its own purposes. Thus, the traditional view of Ambrose's central role in affairs is problematic considering the evidence.

Viewed against the larger backdrop of diplomatic activity, it is quite possible that Ambrose's letter to Valentinian in 386 served an entirely different purpose. Given Ambrose's outsider status, *Ep.* 30 now has extraordinary significance. It is evidence of Ambrose's attempt to gain access to a court with which he had never enjoyed a close relationship since its establishment after Gratian's murder in 383.[58] By trying to insert himself directly into the affairs of the court through provocation of Maximus, Ambrose called attention to himself in order to establish direct contact with Valentinian himself, who was older and presumably assuming more control of his administration. Ambrose had hoped to provide Valentinian with a foolproof strategy against Maximus' claim for supremacy over the west. Early in the letter Ambrose hinted to Valentinian a way to strengthen Milan's position against the usurper in a novel way. Ambrose wrote of his exchange with Maximus:

> "Why," he [Maximus] asked, "did you come?" "Because, then [383] I was seeking peace for one who was weaker, but now [386] for one who is [your] equal." He asked, "By whose kindness is he equal?" I responded, "By all-powerful God, who preserved for Valentinian the kingdom which he had given [to him]."[59]

The exchange is subtle but important. By claiming equal status for Valentinian, Ambrose turned Maximus' well-known claim of divine right against him.[60] Maximus' question was pointed: Did Theodosius promise military support for Valentinian? Declaring that Valentinian's strength and legitimacy derived from divine authority and not earthly alliances elevated Valentinian while undermining Maximus' justification for usurping power from Gratian. Ambrose's turn of phrase also sidestepped a direct answer to Maximus' question. The rhetorical shift is profound. By justifying Valentinian on these grounds, Ambrose tried to position himself more securely in Milan, for the passage also sent a clear signal to Valentinian that the best defense against Maximus was to openly formalize religious policies that favored a Nicene court in Milan, thereby denying Maximus

his most significant leverage for intervening in Milan's affairs. Ambrose's intent by this gesture broadcasted a strong signal: Milan could never be truly secure from Maximus, or Theodosius for that matter, as long as the house of Valentinian remained estranged from the Nicene church. The difference here is that Ambrose used Maximus as a club against Valentinian, not as a means to divert attention from himself, but rather as a means to call attention to his ability to promote the Valentinian court.[61] For good measure, to counter any doubt of his loyalty, Ambrose made the point at the letter's end that he was "exiled" from Trier for not associating with the bishops responsible for persecuting Priscillian's followers, thereby turning mission failure into proof that he had not made common cause with Maximus.[62] While exile may have served Ambrose's interest to divorce himself from any talk of collusion with Maximus, it served another purpose entirely. Ambrose signaled to Valentinian that he was not the religious zealot that Maximus was; he could be more accommodating in the formation of new religious policies in Milan. Although the conflict over the Portian basilica had been the source of deep embarrassment for the Milan court, Ambrose's gesture for a new relationship, with national security and imperial independence as the goal, made the case for restoration of the bishop's position that he had not enjoyed since the days of Gratian. Both sides could look past any previous missteps as they sought to maintain independence by presenting a united front against outside influences and threats. The boon for Ambrose would be a game-changer. As a matter of practicality over theology, the formal shift in Milan's imperial stance to support Nicene policies would require consultation and guidance from Ambrose, effectively ensuring frequent contact between bishop and emperor as a matter of national security and religious policy, not merely to ease ruffled egos caused by the Portian basilica crisis. It was a bold move because the payoff could be a historic as well as a political achievement for Ambrose. The significance of his efforts reveals a vital aspect of political survival in Late Antiquity—the need for bishops to keep emperors close by. Maintaining an independent court in Milan served as much Ambrose's purposes for an influential position at court as it did Valentinian's need to keep at bay his elder competitors, Maximus and Theodosius. This was not to be, however, as the events were too enormous to control. The court's continued exclusion of Ambrose after his return indicates that such gestures were ignored and his marginal status continued. It was Theodosius who forced Valentinian to abandon his pro-Arian policies for the Nicene faith as a precondition to attacking Maximus in 388.[63] Having been shut out by the imperial court, other evidence indicates Ambrose remained on the fringes of court life even after Maximus invaded Italy in the summer of 387.[64]

Maximus' one-year reign in Italy is the pivotal period on which Ambrose's reputation turns. Yet we encounter one of the most intriguing silences of Ambrose's career. If Ambrose and Maximus were as hostile toward each other as *Letter* 30 implies, the gap in Ambrose's activities during the year 387-388 could be explained by assuming that he fled Milan with the other Valentinian loyalists. There is no evidence, however, that such a retreat occurred, and if Ambrose remained in Milan under the new administration of his nemesis Maximus, should we not hear of problems, given their discord? Activities during the year of Maximus' occupation perhaps reveal the common interests shared by both the bishop and the usurper, who, one author says, maintained a "cordial" relationship that was "mutually beneficial."[65] Other factors, however, can explain the bishop's relative silence during this year and they provide insight into the emerging image of Ambrose as a defender of innocence.

Conquering emperors were besieged by throngs of welcoming audiences. When Maximus established himself at Trier, a wide array of interest groups converged on the court to hail this new emperor from Britain. Transplants from Gratian's court, bishops and their retinues from throughout the western provinces, and possibly the East all sought Maximus' patronage.[66] Similarly, Milan would have been overwhelmed by the arrival of the court from Trier in 386.[67] Professional men ranging from imperial administrators and officials, military personnel, attendants and supporters, artisans and merchants would have accompanied Maximus.[68] Some sense of the social and political realignment affecting Ambrose during that year of invasion of Italy may be gleaned from accounts of Theodosius' arrival in Italy after defeating Maximus.[69] Disruption of patronage networks made access to the court difficult, if not impossible. The episcopal entourage from Trier would have been devoted to maintaining their influence over Maximus, thereby insulating Maximus from the bishop of Milan, as Ambrose had done with Gratian and had attempted to do with Valentinian.[70] Additionally, Maximus' religious policies would have enjoyed support from a cross section of the community.[71] Aside from defending the interests of fellow Nicene Christians, Maximus demonstrated that he was an emperor for all. The famous pagan orator Symmachus was received from Rome to deliver a panegyric to the conquering Maximus.[72] As if to live down his part in religious persecution, Maximus ordered a synagogue in Rome to be rebuilt at church cost after it had been destroyed by a Christian mob.[73] Given the centralizing policies of the new imperial court from Trier, such openness would have eased fears in certain quarters and attracted an influx of new clients. Had Ambrose attempted to gain regular access and favor, he would have had to negotiate his way through a patronage system managed

by the powerful new imperial apparatus being fashioned in Milan. In effect, he was marginalized once again from the imperial inner circle by the choking effect of a new court establishing itself and the self-serving bureaucracy forming to influence and protect it.

The uncertain political landscape caused by Maximus' invasion of Italy in 387 and Valentinian's flight to the east can also help explain Ambrose's relative silence. Invasion upset the political equilibrium that had existed between Trier, Milan, and Constantinople, and the competition between the Nicene emperors Maximus and Theodosius became awkward for those seeking imperial patronage. The experiences of the pagan senator, Symmachus, and Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, provide two vivid examples. Symmachus was forced to endure embarrassment and humiliation after Maximus was defeated by Theodosius; until Theodosius rehabilitated him, Symmachus suffered severe social and political penalties for having delivered the welcoming panegyric to Maximus in the previous year. Theophilus was disgraced when it became known that he had sent a presbyter named Isidore bearing gifts and two letters of congratulations—one for Maximus and one for Theodosius—to be delivered to the proper victor.[74] Given the uncertainty of the situation, being a Nicene bishop in Milan may have been the least desirable job when one considers the bind in which Ambrose found himself.

All things changed when Theodosius destroyed Maximus in the summer of 388. Ambrose finally began to emerge from the marginalized status to which he had been relegated since 383. The change can be documented in the manner the bishop depicted himself about the time Maximus fell to Theodosius. In this period Ambrose completed his *Commentary on Psalms 61*. Believed to be a private composition rather than a sermon because of its attack on Maximus and Gratian's assassin, Andragathius, the sermon casts Gratian in the role of Jesus and Maximus as Pilate. Ambrose assigns himself the role of Joseph of Arimathea, the one follower of Jesus among the Sanhedrin who assumed responsibility for burying him after the crucifixion.[75] Here Ambrose predicted punishment for Maximus as Pilate.[76] Five years later, condemnation of Maximus and self-promotion also appear in Ambrose's funeral oration to Valentinian (d. 392).[77] Here Ambrose characterized himself as a surrogate father who was entrusted by the empress Justina as an envoy sent into an enemy camp to ensure the safety of Milan and to claim the remains of Gratian. Ambrose wrote:

> I took you up a child when as an envoy I went to your enemy [Maximus], I embraced you when you were entrusted to me by the hands of your mother [Justina]. As your envoy I returned to Gaul,

> and sweet to me was that service done on behalf of your safety primarily, and secondly on behalf of peace and piety with which you were requesting the remains of your brother.[78]

For the first time Ambrose publicly declared his role as defender of the Valentinian court, reviving his self-described role in *Ep.* 30.5 as among the *patres orphanorum*—protectors of widows and orphans. The symbolism brilliantly echoes the tradition of the *defensor civitatis* whose purpose was to serve the underrepresented and vulnerable citizens of the Roman community.[79] Yet Ambrose was qualitatively different now; he projected himself as a paternal figure nurturing and defending the interests of the vulnerable imperial family. The construction was novel in the manner he promoted the personal bonds between the *pater orphanorum* and his charge. This becomes evident in the way Ambrose transformed himself into a victim of Maximus. At a crucial point in the oration, Ambrose referred to the brother emperors Gratian and Valentinian as his "plucked-out eyes," illustrating his intimacy with the imperial family and the physical agony he shared with them.[80] The ocular association was a cunning move that implies that Ambrose's perception of events was first and foremost through imperial interests. The violence committed against just rulers was transferred to Ambrose when he promoted his metaphorical scars as marks of honor. He proclaimed: "More happily do emperors persecute bishops than highly esteem them. How much more blessed did Maximus' threats make me! In his hatred there was praise, in their [Gratian and Valentinian] love, the legacy of pain from [their] death."[81] By shifting the focus to himself Ambrose claimed to have endured the same odium as Gratian and Valentinian, thereby claiming an equal share in their suffering and praise. As a living martyr of the turbulent events, Ambrose went further to fashion an intimate relationship with both emperors. He revealed in public to the mourning audience that Valentinian had "often summoned" him privately and that Gratian cried out his name with his dying breath.[82] The significance of such embellishments, however brief, cannot be overstated; they show how Ambrose controlled the construction of memory and image for a consuming public and, more important, now for the imperial court of Theodosius, which was imposing a realignment of power and a new order in the West. The *imperator* title with which Ambrose dubs Maximus in this oration nearly four years after the usurper's fall is striking because it implies all emperors, including Theodosius, were potential persecutors of Ambrose and the *patres orphanorum* who worked for the cause of innocents.[83] Thus, by inserting himself into the center of diplomatic events after the fact, Ambrose was

able to create the impression that he was an imperial insider, a position that he had struggled to obtain since Gratian's fall in 383.

These events, however, came to be understood differently as the image of Ambrose defending the interests of the ill-fated Valentinian against the usurper-emperor Magnus Maximus have endured. Seeking peace and demanding justice, both perceived goals of the missions to Trier, form the basis of Ambrose's image, and bishops like him, as the *patres orphanorum*—an image that Theodosius undoubtedly recognized when he accepted the bishop's lead in repairing his imperial image as a result of the carnage at Thessalonica.

NOTES

1. A version of this chapter was delivered to the Fifteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, August 2007. I am grateful for the comments of and discussions with Professors Hal Drake, Neil McLynn, Michelle Salzman, Beth Digeser, Rita Lizzi-Testa, and Daniel Williams. Historical representations and legal renderings regarding Theodosius' role in the massacre at Thessalonica are deftly managed elsewhere in this volume by Robert M. Frakes, "Butheric and the Charioteer." A critical revision of Ambrose's relationship with Theodosius is offered by Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, 1994), 291-360.
2. Ambrose, Epistle 30 (*CSEL* 82.1), ed. Otto Faller (Vienna, 1968), 207-215. Both missions are combined in this single correspondence to Valentinian II. English translations available in J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches* (Liverpool, 2005), 352-357, and S. Mary Melchior Beyenka, *Saint Ambrose: Letters* (Washington, D.C., repr. 1967), 57-62.
3. H. A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations* (Berkeley, 1976), is an excellent study in method and analysis for speeches, reminding readers of the complexity and loaded messages of ancient speeches. Drake's *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore, 2000) is necessary reading for all students, novices and specialists alike, wanting to understand the evolution of political authority in the fourth century.
4. On the authenticity of *Ep.* 30, see Norbert Dörner, "Ambrosius in Trier," *Historia* 50 (2001): 217-244. Compare with J.W.H.G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches*, 350-351.
5. These events are singularly dependent on Ambrose, *Ep.* 30 and *de obitu Valentiniani* (*CSEL* 73). For the following events, see John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364-425* (Oxford, 1975), 175-182.
6. Date of the second mission has been a point of much discussion. Ancient sources place it between 385 and 387. For the former, see *Chronica Minora* I.462, 646, ed. Theodor Mommsen (rep. Munich, 1981); for the latter, see *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constitinopolitana,* ed. R. W. Burgess

(Oxford, 1993), 76. An earlier date of 384 is argued by V. Grumel "La deuxième mission de saint Ambroise auprès de Maxime," *Revue des études byzantines* 9 (1951): 160. The year 385 is favored by T. D. Barnes, "Ambrose and the Basilicas of Milan in 385 and 386," in *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 4 (2000): 295, and Dörner, "Ambrosius in Trier," 237-242. Jean-Rémy Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain* (Paris, 1933), 167, supports 386; Henry Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1976), 137; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 180 n. 6; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 164 n. 25, 217-219. Maximus' letter to Valentinian in *Collectio Avellana* 39.1 (*CSEL* 35, 88-89) appears definitive for 386. See Daniel Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford, 1995), 216.

7. For a recent argument that Justina was a princess from the Constantinian dynasty, see Robert M. Frakes, "The Dynasty of Constantine down to 363," in Noel Lenski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge, 2006), 91-110.
8. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.7 (*CSEL* 82.1, 211.68): *quasi filius ad patrem venire . . .*
9. Angelo Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times,* trans. M. Joseph Costello (South Bend, 1964), 212-213.
10. Magnus Maximus, *Collectio Avellana* 39 (*CSEL* 35, 88-89), declares support for the Nicene community of Milan.
11. A detailed treatment of the basilica issues and events appears in McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan,* 187-208.
12. Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 19. For translations, see A. Bastiaensen, *Vita Cipriano, Vita Ambrogio, Vita di Agostino* (Milan, 1975), 55-125; Michele Pellegrino, *Paolino di Milano: Vita di S. Ambrogio,* (Rome, 1961) ; Emilien Lamirande, *Paulin de Milan et La "Vita Ambrosii": Aspects de la Religion sous le Bas-Empire* (Bellarmin-Montréal, 1982).
13. Hans Freiherrn von Campenhausen, *Ambrosius von Miland als Kirchenpolitiker* (Berlin, 1929), 164.
14. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain*, 124-125; F. Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 1:222-223; Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times,* 212-213.
15. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court,* 177. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts*, 198.
16. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan,* 161; cf. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila,* 112. On evaluation of the threat of Maximus at this early stage, see Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Time of St. Ambrose,* 1:221; Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain,* 122-123.
17. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain*, 124-125, with Otto Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* (Berlin, 1913), 511-512.
18. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain*, 125. Ambrose's *De Fide* was written to Gratian as a defense against allegations that he was a heretic. See Pierre Nautin, "Les premières relations d'Ambroise avec l'empereur Gratien: Le '*De fide*' (livres I et II)" in *Ambroise de Milan: Dix études*, ed. Yves-Marie Duval (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1974), 224-244. For opposing view see Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts*, 141-148. On

Gratian's support of Ambrose, see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 188 n. 3; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 79 n. 1-2.

19. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain*, 125-126: Palanque suggests that Ambrose would not have been unwilling to allow Maximus' bishop of Trier an opportunity to influence Valentinian as Ambrose had done Gratian. For implications of this relationship, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan,* 98-106; Virginia Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy* (Berkeley, 1995), 85-89.
20. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain*, 126. See also Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 1:222-223.
21. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan,* 161, writes: "Ambrose's allegiance [to Valentinian] is a striking illustration of his priorities. Like the pagan senators of Rome, he was less concerned with the [Valentinian] regime's ideological complexion than with retaining his access to the machinery of government." See also Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain*, 126.
22. Grumel, "La deuxième mission de saint Ambroise auprès de Maxime," 154-160.
23. Ibid., 160.
24. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain,* 171-172; sentiment echoed by Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts,* 224.
25. Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 1:346.
26. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain,* 172.
27. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 217. Gerhard Rauschen, *Jahrbücher der christlichen Kirche unter dem Kaiser Theodosius dem Grossen: Versuch einer Erneuerung der Annales Ecclesiastical des Baronius für die Jahre 378-395* (Freiburg, 1897), 487, argues the discord between Ambrose and Valentinian was so severe that Ambrose would not have served as ambassador after the Arian crisis. See Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 1:345 n. 1.
28. In 384 Ambrose had led the opposition against pagan senators petitioning for the restoration of the Altar of Victory in the senate, demanding that Valentinian provide a copy of the pagan petitions so that he could issue a retort. Ambrose, *Ep.* 17, 18. See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies,* 205-211.
29. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.4: *"Quoniam me lusistis ! Et ille Bauto . . . "*
30. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.12. A parallel scenario occurred between Martin of Tours and Maximus. See Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica* II.50.2 (*SC* 411); *Dialogi* III.12-13 (*CSEL* 1). It begs the question: Did Ambrose refuse a quid pro quo, as Martin supposedly rejected from Maximus, to turn over Gratian's remains in return for the bishop's participation in the concretion of Trier's new bishop, Felix?
31. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain,* 173-174.
32. Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose,* 1:349, with Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain,* 173.
33. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts*, 200; See also Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain,* 516-518; Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila*, 134-135.

34. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts,* 226: refers to Maximus' letter of warning to Valentinian. See Magnus Maximus, *Ep.* 40 (*CSEL* 35, 88-89).
35. Norbert Dörner, "Ambrosius in Trier," 217-244, esp. 229.
36. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches*, 350-351.
37. Ibid., 27-32, 41, 351.
38. While Liebeschuetz utterly discounts the letter's authenticity based on its tone, he concedes its dependability for recording the historical context of the meeting with Maximus. See Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches*, 41, 351.
39. *Ep.* 30.7: *In quo ego te circumscripsi? Qui ubi primum veni, cum diceres quod Valentinianus ad te quasi filius ad patrem venire deberet, responderim non esse aequum, ut aspero hiemis puer cum matre vidua penetraret Alpes ; sine matre autem tanto itineri dubiis rebus committeretur? De pace nobis legationem commissam, non de adventu eius promissionem. Spondere nos id non potuisse certum est, quod mandatum non erat, me certe nihil spopondisse, adeo ut diceres: Exspectemus, quid Victor responsi referat. Illum autem liquet me retento pervenisse Mediolanum negatumque ei quod postulabat. De pace tantum conspirare studia, non de adventu imperatoris, quem moveri non oporteret. Praesens eram, ubi Victor rediit. Quomodo ergo revocavi Valentinianum? Legati iterum missi ad Gallias, qui eius adventum negarent, apud Valentiam Gallorum me reppererunt. Milites utriusque partis, qui custodirent iuga montium, offendi revertens.*
40. Raymond van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley, 1985), esp. 106.
41. One can assume that a prudent Ambrose had done a bit of groundwork to prepare certain quarters of the gathered bishops before this public meeting.
42. On the nature of ancient letter writing, see Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches*, 28-30.
43. Magnus Maximus, *Ep.* 40 (*CSEL* 35, 88-89).
44. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.13: *Vale imperator, et esto tutior adversus hominem pacis involucro bellum tegentem. Vale!*
45. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.1-5: *Etsi superioris legationis meae fides ita adprobata sit tibi, ut ratio eius a me non quaereretur . . .*
46. While it is possible that events moved so quickly that Ambrose's participation was unnecessary, his aloofness emphasizes the point.
47. Ambrose's estrangement and dubious relationship with Valentinian is not unlike that he had with emperors Theodosius and Gratian; see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 291-330, and Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic*, 85-89.
48. *Ep.* 30.7.70: *De pace nobis legationem commissam, non de adventu eius promissionem. Spondere nos id non potuisse certum est, quod mandatum non erat.*
49. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.7.
50. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.7. For Maximus' embassy to Theodosius, see Zosimus *HE* 4.37.2.
51. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.7. See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies,* 177 n. 1.
52. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.9.
53. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.2-3.

54. Rufinus, *HE* 11.15, reports that both Maximus and Valentinian perpetrated a fiction of peace, knowing that war would eventually transpire. The opinion can only be interpreted as an attempt to explain events after the fact.
55. Zosimus, *Historia nova* 4.42-45. Although the move served as a pretext for invasion by Maximus, both sides were engaged without Ambrose.
56. *Chronica minora* I, 462, (*MGH* 1 [Berlin, 1892] Munich, 1981), *PL* 51, 586 B.
57. Grumel, "La deuxième mission de saint Ambroise auprès de Maxime," 159-160.
58. Ambrose's first mission was unremarkable and therefore did not earn any special consideration from the Valentinian court. On Gratian's support of Ambrose, see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 188 n. 3; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 79 n. 1-2.
59. Ambrose, *Ep.* 30.3.35: *"Cur," inquit, "ingressus es? "—"Quia tunc ut interiori pacem petebam, nunc ut aequali."— "Cuius, inquit, beneficio aequali?"—Respondi: "Omnipotentis dei, qui Valentiniano regnum, quod dederat, reservavit."*
60. Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 20: Maximus had claimed that his usurpation and reign were legitimated by "divine appointment" and the "favor of God." Previously, Valentinian's support for Arian Christianity had been used by Maximus as leverage for his claim to legitimacy. See Magnus Maximus, *Ep.* 40 (*CSEL* 35, 90-91).
61. The possibility that Ambrose created a political smokescreen of sorts for his complete failure is not beyond doubt; Ambrose received only one audience with Maximus and was dismissed.
62. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain,* 174, suggests that exile on religious grounds may have saved Ambrose from any suspicion of collusion with Maximus.
63. Ambrose, *Ep.* 25 (*CSEL* 82.1, 176-178): refers to Theodosius' influence on Valentinian. Theodoret, *HE* 5.15, references the essence of Theodosius' demands on Valentinian. See Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 1:352.
64. For Maximus' invasion of Italy, see Zosimus, *Historia nova* 4.42.6.
65. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts,* 227.
66. Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 20 (*SC* 133).
67. Images of Maximus' policies and reign are complex. Negative portrayals famously appear in Ambrose, *de obitu Valentiniani* 28 (*CSEL* 73), and Pacatus, *Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius,* 24.1, 43.3. n. 6, ed. and trans. C.E.V. Nixon (Liverpool, 1987). Sympathetic depictions can be found in Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica* II.50 (*SC* 411) and *Dialogi* III.11 (*CSEL* 1). On moderate policies of Maximus, see Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose,* 1:351.
68. On the vibrant culture of new transplants established by various imperial courts in northern Italy, see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies,*183-188, with L. Ruggini, "Ebrei e orientali nell' Italia settentrionale fra il IV e il VI secolo d. Cr.," *Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris* 35 (1959):186-308.
69. On Theodosius' disruption of Ambrose's monopoly over ecclesiastical activity in Milan, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan,* 297.

70. Martin was also alienated by the bishops at Trier trying to prevent him gaining the favor of Maximus. See Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* III.11 (*CSEL* 1, 208-209).
71. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 167. For a fair treatment under Maximus' reign, see J-R. Palanque, "Sur l'usurpation de Maxime," *Revue des Études Anciennes* 31 (1929): 33-36.
72. Socrates, *HE* 5.14.5.
73. Ambrose, *Ep.* 74.22-23 (*CSEL* 82.3).
74. On Symmachus, see Symmachus, *Ep.* 2, 12, 30, 31; Socrates, *HE* 5.14.5-6. On Theophilus, see Socrates, *HE* 6.2.6-9; Rufinus, *HE* 5.19 and 32; Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 35; cited in Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila,* 124 n. 2-3; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies,* 229 n. 3.
75. Ambrose, *In psalmum LXI enarratio* [Psalm 62] (*CSEL* 64, 378-397). Exact dating is unknown: Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose* 2:690-691 suggested early 387, with M. Ihm, *Studia Ambrosiana* (Leipzig, 1889), 23. G. Rauchen, *Jahrbücher der Christlichen Kirche unter dem Kaiser Theodosius dem Grossen* (Freiburg, 1897), 310, suggested after Maximus' death. For discussion on correlations between commentaries and sermons of Ambrose in the political period 383-387, see Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire Romain,* 176-181, 186-187. Additional attacks on Maximus appear in Ambrose, *Apologia Prophetae David* 27. One wonders if, like Theophilus, Ambrose had a second sermon in waiting.
76. Ambrose, *Explanatio psalmi LXI* 26.10 (*CSEL* 64, 394): *Sed longe Maximus saevior denegabat, quod ipse Pilatus auferre non potuit. In quo parricidae humanitas defuit, innocenti tamen non defuit gratia: et ad tempus assumpta patientia, vindicta paululum comperendinata est.*
77. For analysis implicating suicide, see Brian Croke, "Arbogast and the Death of Valentinian II," *Historia* 25 (1976): 235-244. Counter argument that Arbogast murdered Valentinian offered by P. Grattarola, "La morte dell'imperatore Valentiniano II," *Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo, Classe di lettere, scienze morali e storiche* 113 (1979): 359-370. Discussed with McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan,* 336-337.
78. Ambrose, *de obitu Valentiniani* 28.10 (*CSEL* 73, 343): *Ego te suscepi parvulum, cum legatus ad hostem tuum pergerem, ego maternis traditum manibus amplexus sum, ego tuus iterum legatus repetivi Gallias, et mihi dulce illud officium fuit pro salute tua primo, deinde pro pace atque pietate, qua fraternas reliquias postulabas . . .*
79. On the origins and development of the *defensor civitatis* and its connections with episcopal duties, see the thorough study by Robert M. Frakes, *Contra Potentium Iniurias: The Defensor Civitatis and Late Roman Justice* (Munich, 2001).
80. Ambrose, *de obitu Valentiniani* 39.10 (*CSEL* 73, 349): *oculos mihi effossos…*
81. Ambrose, *de obitu Valentiniani* 39.10-15 (*CSEL* 73, 349): *Felicius episcopos persequuntur imperatores quam diligunt. Quanto mihi beatius Maximus minabatur ! In illius odio laus erat, in horum amore supplicii feralis hereditas.*
82. Ambrose, *de obitu Valentiniani* 23.5 (*CSEL* 73, 341): *Illa privata, quod saepe me appellabat absentem… de obitu Valentiniani* 79b (*CSEL* 73, 366-367): *Tu me inter tua pericula requirebas, tu in tuis extremis me appellabas, meum de te plus dolebas dolorem.*

83. Invocation of the honorific title served to resurrect the memory of Maximus from disgrace so that he could be associated with any emperor of Ambrose's choosing. Eventually Ambrose placed Maximus in hellish damnation, after Theodosius's death in 395. See *de obitu Theodosii* 38 (*CSEL* 73).

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PART II

THE FUNCTION OF ROMAN TRADITION IN EMERGENT SOCIETIES

5

"YOUR BROTHERS, THE ROMANS": EARLY ISLAMIC HISTORY AS A TURN OF THE CLASSICAL PAGE IN EARLY MUSLIM THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

Thomas Sizgorich

Upon its appearance in 2000 Hal Drake's *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* crucially reformulated an old and thorny problem in the history of Late Antiquity, a problem, as Drake showed, that was in fact a cluster of problems.[1] The book took as its point of departure the conversion of Constantine and the consequences this conversion carried for the Roman Empire. The organizing question of the book was, to state it crudely, Was Constantine a pro-Christian, pro-Nicene zealot, and if he was, why wasn't he? This was by no means a new question—it had occupied some of the foremost historians of the ancient world for the better part of two centuries—but the way in which it had been phrased previously tended to focus the problem on the relative "sincerity" of Constantine's conversion; if the conversion to Christianity was "sincere," this line of reasoning ran, then Constantine must have been a persecutor at heart who restrained himself as a matter of tactical prudence. Conversely, if his conversion was not "sincere" we can more readily explain his otherwise disconcerting reluctance to persecute his non-Christian subjects over matters of religion as, it was assumed, any "sincere" Christian would do. The crucial insight of Drake's initial intervention in this debate—that the key question was not the sincerity of

Constantine's conversion to Christianity but rather the character of the Christianity he embraced—made the question of Constantine's religious policies not one dependent on essentializing notions of Christianity as an inherently intolerant faith, but rather a matter of centuries-old rules of Roman imperial comportment, the discursive push and pull of late ancient power politics, and subtle processes of change over time. In other words, Drake's insight made the question of Constantine's conversion and its consequences for the Roman world a properly historical question once again.

As is often the case with researchers who are also active and committed teachers, Drake's style of historical hermeneutics is revealingly reflected in his pedagogy. In his instruction of both graduate and undergraduate students, for example, Drake has for almost forty years made exceedingly effective use of the question of the fate of the ancient world and, more specifically, the fate of "Rome." On undergraduate midterms and doctoral exams alike, thousands of Drake's students have encountered the apparently innocuous invitation to explain the "fall of Rome" or to pick a date after which "Rome" was no more. From some historians, such a question has a simple, correct answer that can be memorized and reproduced on command. From Drake, by contrast, this question is in fact an incitement to ruminate as the student sees fit on the problem of historical causation, the misguided tyranny of ossified historiographic orthodoxy, or the punishing complexity of late ancient Roman and Christian cultural interpenetration. In the problem of the fate of the ancient world, that is, Drake has located for himself and his students a laboratory in which to grapple with some of the most vexing questions historians confront: the problem of ongoing change imagined and described by contemporaries as evidence of stasis, the effects of obscure cultural processes on events and their narration, and the all but insurmountable alterity of the world inhabited by those whose lives, thoughts, and actions we seek to understand and explain.

This chapter will also take the "end of antiquity" as its subject. I will examine the fate of classical antiquity not from the point of view of the Romans, however, but from the point of view of the early Muslim *umma*, the community that, in many iterations of the Western Civilization narrative, did the most to bring Roman antiquity to an end.[2] As we shall see, however, as imagined by the late ancient and early medieval Muslim *umma* itself, the coming of Islam did not betoken the end of antiquity; rather, it was but another episode in what was by the first/seventh century[3] already an ancient narrative of prophecy, revelation, cultural continuity and imperial economies in which Rome, the Arabs and the line

of prophets that culminated with Muhammad were all intimately emplotted.

I

When I conceived this chapter, I had a fairly straightforward approach in mind. I would offer a brief survey of early Muslim literature with the purpose of demonstrating that for Muslims living, thinking, and writing in the first three centuries after the *hijra*, the advent of Islam was understood not as a cataclysmic break with classical "antiquity" but as merely another chapter in an ongoing drama in which the Arabs and even the nascent Muslim *umma* had been long subsumed. As I set about actually laying out this argument, however, I realized that the question of the early Islamic view of "antiquity" and the "end of antiquity" was much more complicated than I had first envisioned. The complexity of this question may be traced to a number of factors.

First, the early Islamic *umma* seems to have understood itself to be the product of at least two strains of antiquity. On the one hand, there was Arabian "antiquity," an ever-receding and increasingly romanticized pre-Islamic Bedouin past that was recalled in gorgeous verse that longingly evoked acts of warrior virtue, the seduction of dark-eyed and lithesome Bedouin girls and the desolation of lonely wanderers deprived of lover, family or tribe.

A sample of such verses:

I.
My heart is my companion.
Wherever I wish to go
I urge it on with a firm command.

I feared I would die
Before the wheel of war
Turned down
Over the two sons of Damdam
Who slandered me
Though I never did them the same
Vowing blood
If I failed to meet them.

Let them.
I left their father
Carrion for the lion
And the grey-faced bird of prey.

II.
She entertains her companion awhile,
Then slackens,
Lower back and buttocks
Quivering.

Wide-hipped, delicate,
Elbows soft, walk tender,
As if a thorn were caught
in the arch of her sandal.

As she rises
A fragrance of musk trails
Her sleeve cuffs with the scent
Of rose jasmine brimming over.[4]

During these first centuries of Islam, the recollection of this Bedouin past became a major antiquarian industry among Umayyad and Abbasid intellectuals and professional scholars, and, much like the vigorous attention devoted to Anglo-Saxon philology, literature, and history in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, the "collection," study and, canonization of Arab antiquities became under the early Muslim empires one crucial outpost in larger projects of communal and imperial self-fashioning.[5]

Illustrative of this process is a medieval story Rina Drory has cited in the context of a dazzling study of the cultural valences of pre-Islamic poetry under the Abbasids. It seems that the son of the caliph al-Mansur (r. 754-775) was one day reciting a lesson with his teacher, a man named al-Mufaddal al-Dabbi.[6] The lesson for that day was a piece of pre-Islamic poetry, a field in which the philologist al-Mufaddal specialized. The Caliph listened to the lesson, unobserved, until it was complete, and then summoned his son and the boy's teacher to a secluded chamber. Once there, the Caliph asked al-Mufaddal to assemble for his son a collection of the best works of obscure pre-Islamic poets, adding that in doing so "he would perform a great service." The result, we are told, was the production of one of the great anthologies of pre-Islamic poetry, the *Mufaddaliyat*. Perhaps more important for our purposes, however, is what this story suggests about elite Arab self-fashioning by the middle of the second/eighth century. Even by that date, it would seem that proper Muslim *paideia* included the ability to recite pre-Islamic poetry. Moreover, the cultural capital represented by this ability increased with the antiquity

and obscurity of the poetry recited. As Drory has suggested, such Arabic antiquarianism "indicates the special status accorded to pre-Islamic past in the Abbasid cultural repertoire of self-images."[7]

Yet the pre-Islamic Arab past was also ever-present in the imaginations of early Muslims as the *jahiliyya*, or "time of ignorance." The *jahiliyya* was recalled as a time of idolatry, all-against-all war, infanticide, poverty, abasement before the imperial powers of Late Antiquity, and rampant moral depravity. For one Muslim author writing in the third/ninth century, it was a measure of the superiority of both the prophet Muhammad and his revelation that they were able to transform the Arabs from a barbarous, desperate and abject people into the morally, ethically, and politically formidable people that they had become. The Arab communities before the advent of Islam, he said, were:

> The greatest of communities with regard to unbelief, the most overeager with regard to anger and faction-forming. There was no impetus toward unity among them, and no king could control them. They had before them nothing [revealed by] prophecy . . . [and they were] illiterate, and the Scriptures were unknown to them. They worshiped idols, and poured out blood, breaking the bonds of parenthood and killing their own children. Their most common mode of life was predatory raiding. And they were conquered by their own pleasures and their own desires. But [Muhammad] moved them away from the worship of idols and to the worship of the one God. He made of them a literate community, when before that they had been illiterate. And he made them judicious and wise, whereas before there had been ignorance and a scarcity of learning. He tamed their hearts, those who before had been enemies, and he ennobled their characters, those who before had been wicked, and he shepherded those who had had no shepherd.[8]

Muhammad's revelation had redeemed the Arabs from the *jahiliyya* and all that it represented. Against the backdrop of the *jahiliyya*'s darkness, the grandeur of the new Islamic dispensation could be most meaningfully measured and appreciated. In his second-/eighth-century history of the conquest of Syria, for example, the Muslim author al-Azdi described a meeting between a Muslim and a Roman in which the Muslim described the state of the Arabs before Muhammad. The Roman has been denigrating the Arabs as he knows them when the Muslim says:

> As for what you say about our being a people of rocks and stones, of suffering and misery, by God it was as you describe. We do not

> deny that, and we do not dissociate ourselves from it, and we were even more unfortunate than what you said . . . During that time it was as though we were on the brim of a pit of fire, and whoever among us died, died in unbelief and fell into the fire, and whoever among us lived, lived in unbelief as an infidel in the eyes of his Lord, cut off from his mercy. Then God sent among us a messenger . . . [9]

Thus, the *jahiliyya* was recalled as an antiquity that ended with the triumph of Islam. It was the dark night to which Islam provided a splendid and welcome dawn. But the memory of the *jahiliyya* was more than that. Insofar as the early Muslim narratives of communal origins were also Arab *Volksgeschichte*, for example, the *jahiliyya* became a vivid and fertile theater of the imagination as Arab authors articulated primordialist formulae concerning Arab identity, culture, and history.[10] To know real Arabic was to know the Arabic of the "Arabs of the Desert," or the Bedouin. To express oneself as a real Arab was to do so in verse that imitated, as closely as possible, the poetic forms of the pre-Islamic poets.[11] Nor should we understand this as antiquarianism for antiquarianism's sake alone, as Drory has made clear; at stake was a species of highly charged cultural capital that translated, often seamlessly, into political power.[12]

II

The *jahiliyya* was not the only antiquity available to the early Muslim community. There was also the antiquity of the Greeks and Romans, an antiquity that many third-/ninth-century Muslims understood to be embodied in their Christian contemporaries, according to the acid prose of the Iraqi polymath al-Jahiz (d. 255/868-869). Although al-Jahiz fervently denied this—the Christian Romans and the great Greek philosophers and scientists of antiquity were very different groups of people, he insisted—to many of his Muslim contemporaries the legacy of Greek learning, Roman *imperium,* and Christian empire were all of a piece.[13]

It is not difficult to understand why for al-Jahiz's Muslim contemporaries the ancient histories of the Greeks and Romans seemed personified in contemporary Christians. For one thing, the contemporary Christians with whom these Muslim had daily contact seem to have been quite willing to take the cultural legacy of the classical world in service of Christian doctrine, narratives, and apologetics. This, of course, was itself an ancient and well-established practice by the time that the first Muslim armies appeared on the Syrian steppe, and it is hardly surprising that it continued to flourish in the centuries after the Muslim conquests.

Take, for example, the argumentative strategy deployed by the Christian Abbasid physician, scholar, and translator of ancient Greek texts Qusta b. Luqa, a near-contemporary of al-Jahiz, as he debated points of religion and revelation with a Muslim who had issued a series of doctrinal challenges to him in the form of a letter.[14] As he refuted his interlocutor's claim that the inimitability of Qur'anic verse was a sure sign of Muhammad's prophetic legitimacy, Qusta chose what was in many ways an ingenious strategy; he ostentatiously drew upon his own authoritative knowledge of the history of classical Greco-Roman cultural forms to puncture the arguments of his Muslim rival. Specifically, Qusta wrote that if the measure of prophetic legitimacy was the inimitability of the poetic verse that an individual produced, then it would follow that Homer had been as much a prophet as Muhammad. Qusta based this claim in an allusion to what was in fact a mythical story, current among early Byzantine scholars, about the collection of the Homeric corpus, but he deployed this story, and indeed made potent use of it, in tandem with an equally intimate familiarity with contemporary Muslim narratives concerning the collection of the Qur'anic corpus.[15] Earlier in his epistle, Qusta had noted that the caliph who collected and canonized the Qur'an had insisted upon two witnesses to vouch for every bit of verse included in what would become the official text of the Qur'an. The one exception to this practice, he said, had been a single *sura* admitted on the testimony of a lone Bedouin. By comparison, Qusta continued, when, in an earlier time, a Greek king had overseen the collection of the Homeric corpus, he could rely on scholars to discern truly Homeric verse from counterfeit Homeric lines provided by greedy contemporary poets. Qusta added that the scholars were able to distinguish the real Homeric verses from the false ones, despite the beauty of some of the pseudo-Homerica that the king had decided to leave in the corpus (albeit with a notation that it was not authentic). The point, of course, was that whereas witnesses were required for the collection of the "inimitable" verse of the Qur'an, Homeric verse was in fact so distinctive that it could be readily discerned, without witnesses, from even the finest contemporary poetry. Moreover, Qusta wrote that like the text brought forth by Muhammad, the text of Homer had become a much-consulted repository of both scientific knowledge and rhetorical technique, inspiring such minds as Galen, one "Pilatus" (possibly the Alexandrian physician and philosopher Palladios), and other Greek and Roman scholars to produce secondary studies of the text extracting medical knowledge and exempla of dialectic from the Homeric corpus.[16]

Thus, this Christian author, in dialogue with a Muslim contemporary, took in service of his Christian argument the cultural legacies of the

classical Greco-Roman past. Qusta's fluency in the *adab* of classical Greco-Roman culture was clearly meant to authorize and reinforce crucial components of his critique of Islam and to provide him with intellectual leverage as he systematically disassembled his opponent's arguments. In so doing, Qusta spoke from a carefully crafted subject position, one from which, as a Christian, he mobilized not only the revealed prophetic truths reverenced by his own community and the community of his interlocutor but from which he spoke also as an authoritative and knowledgeable participant in a cultural tradition that had come to fruition in the merging of Hellenic cultural attainment, Roman imperial might and Christian monotheist piety. In his complex and lengthy work of refutation, then, Qusta b. Luqa crafted a self to confound the distinctions upon which al-Jahiz insisted between contemporary Christian, imperial Roman, and ancient Greek and to reaffirm the stubborn association of classical Greco-Roman culture with the contemporary Christian subjects to Muslim rule.[17]

Accordingly, for many early Muslims, Greek intellectual traditions, the legacy of Roman imperial power, and Byzantine Christianity were but the constituent elements within a narrative of cultural, technical, political, and finally religious attainment in which all of the peoples of classical antiquity were emplotted. Moreover, this narrative had built through Late Antiquity to a clash between monotheism and idolatry and reached its culmination with the advent of Muhammad the prophet and the establishment of his *umma* as an imperial power.

In accordance with this narrative, many members of the early Muslim *umma* understood their community to share with the Romans a kindred lineage and a kindred destiny. The basis of this bond was monotheist belief and, more specifically, a shared history of armed struggle against the powers of idolatry and unbelief. It was this shared belief in the one God of Abraham, this shared willingness to kill and die in that God's name, and a shared ideology of imperial holy war that early Muslims believed bound their community not only to the later Roman empire but to the ancient world for which that empire was an enduring emblem.

Yet this antiquity was in many ways as complex and as charged with potent ambiguity as that of the pre-Islamic Arabian past. This was an antiquity in which the Arabs had been the imperial subjects of the Romans, and this was an antiquity whose narrative built to a clash between the monotheistic Arab followers of Muhammad's prophecy and the Christian Romans. As our early Muslim sources make clear, however, many Arab Muslims felt a strong sense of affinity with these same Christian Romans. This was particularly so as members of the Muslim *umma* began to understand their own community as not just a select group of believers but as the masters of a vast empire whose claims to authority

resided in part in the history of that community as a militant defender of Abrahamic monotheism. As I have argued elsewhere, the Arab transition from imperial subjects to imperial masters became central to early Muslim narratives of Islam's advent, while the changing relationship between the Arabs and their former Roman imperial betters became a discursive and literary site of memory in which to ponder the magnitude of the transformation wrought by the advent of an Arab prophet, uttering God's words in the language of the Arabs and leading the Arab people to a God-given empire of their own.[18]

That God-given empire came at the culmination of what was remembered in Muslim tradition as a decades-long world war of monotheistic belief versus polytheist error and oppression, a global and even cosmic struggle in which the Romans and the Muslim *umma* began as distant but closely kindred allies. In his second-/eighth- century work of Qur'anic exegesis, for example, Muqatil b. Sulayman wrote of Muhammad's besieged community in Mecca as observers to and participants in the last great epic struggles between the Roman and Persian empires.[19] For the inhabitants of seventh-century Arabia, the struggle waged by the Romans and the Persians will have seemed like a terrible but distant storm raging beyond the farthest horizon. In Muqatil's text, however, both the early Muslim *umma* and their powerful Qurayshi enemies understood the distant clash of superpowers to resonate with the divisions and contention that also shook Mecca:[20]

> The Romans fought the Persians and the Romans were defeated. And this came to the Prophet and his companions, and it troubled them . . . But the unbelievers [i.e., Quraysh and their allies] were delighted, and they gloated and . . . said, "You are a people of the book, and the Romans are a people of the book. But *our* brothers, the Persian people, have conquered your brothers, the Romans."[21]

It was in this way that Muqatil and other early Qur'anic exegetes sought to historically situate the opening verses of *Surat al-Rum* (Q 30:1-6):

1. Alif lam mim.
2. The Romans have been conquered
3. In the neighboring land.
   But having been conquered they will conquer
4. In a few years.
   On that day the believers will rejoice
5. In the help of God.
   He helps whom He will;

He is all-mighty, ever-merciful.
6. It is a promise of God;
And God does not go back on His promise.
Yet most men do not understand.[22]

Muqatil tells us that when Muhammad shared his revelation with his fellow believers, the eventual victory of the Romans became an article of faith among his followers. One of those followers, the famously pious early convert and future caliph Abu Bakr, is said to have gone so far as to make a wager with the Meccan unbelievers concerning the fate of the rival empires.[23] Of greater consequence, however, is what these texts suggest about the profound affinity second-/eighth-century Muslims imagined their earliest forebears to have shared with the Christian Romans. Muhammad and his persecuted followers did not struggle and suffer in isolation; instead, they were soldiers in a cosmic war on God's behalf, and in this cosmic war there were other fronts, other allies, and other foes. As the struggle of Muhammad's *umma* went, so would go the struggle of those other godly warriors, the followers of the Christian Roman emperor Heraclius in his struggle with the unbelieving Persians. Indeed, for the early Muslim community, Muqatil tells us, the Muslim victory over Quraysh at the battle of Badr and the final Roman victory over the Persians were paired triumphs over polytheist error and sin.[24] Some early Muslim exegetes even claimed that the Romans' war with the Persians had come to an end on the very same day as the battle of Badr, marking a single and synchronized turning of the tide in the first world war on polytheist error. For these Muslim authors, writing in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, but presumably drawing upon much older sources, the fates and histories of the Roman and Muslim communities had long been bound one to the other through ties of militant striving on God's path.[25]

How then, one might ask, did these two godly empires come to blows? The answer to this question, according to one very early Muslim source, also lay in the shared prophetic past that in so many ways bound Rome and Islam one to another long before the proper advent of either. This narrative also underscores the complex lineage of Islam's earliest resources for situating the *umma* and its members within the deep history of the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Mesopotamia. Resonating intriguingly with late ancient rabbinic commentaries on the relationship between Israel and Rome (and Judaism and Christianity), the story, attributed to the very early Muslim traditionalist al-Dahhak b. Muzahim (d. 105/723?), tells of "one of the sons of Esau," a ruler named Rum son of Rum, his foundation of an empire, his imperial vainglory, and his

eventual apostasy from the worship of the one God.[26] It seems that Rum son of Rum, upon establishing his own rule, took a number of wives and concubines and began to procreate prodigiously. Eventually Rum came to call his progeny al-Rum ("the Romans") and, because of his arrogance and self-love also began to worship idols rather than God. Thereafter the king called together all of the holy scriptures inherited from Esau and burned them in a fire. This earned the king a visit and scolding from his son-in-law, the distinctively Islamic (although non-Qur'anic) prophetic figure al-Khidr, the enigmatic "Green One." Created by God to worship Him secretly in the wilderness, al-Khidr was closely associated with Moses and he was imbued with the knowledge of God that Moses lacked (and would never have).[27] Al-Khidr now assumed the role of the chastising prophet, haranguing the erring king for his deviance from God's path. When Rum threatened al-Khidr with a horrible death, however, al-Khidr separated himself from Rum and Rum's daughter. Then al-Khidr asked God if he should wage war against Rum, to which God replied that he should not wage war—but he assured the outraged prophet that He would require those prophets who came after him to make war. The first of those prophets of the sword would be named Moses, God said, and after him would come Joshua, David, and finally Muhammad.[28] Accordingly, this narrative suggests that it was in response to the imperial arrogance of the founder of the Roman line that a lineage of armed prophets came into the world, culminating with Muhammad, whose followers would finally humble the imperial pride of the Romans. Indeed, as Nadia Maria El Cheikh has noted, it is suggested repeatedly in early Muslim conquest narratives that it was the violent arrogance of the Romans, even after their late reconversion to Abrahamic monotheism, that brought the wrath of God down upon them in the guise of the *futuh*-era Muslim armies.[29]

III

Even in early Muslim texts that describe conquest-era battles against the Romans, the affinities between the Muslims and their Roman adversaries consistently intrude. In al-Azdi's second-/eighth-century history of the conquest of Syria, for example, the Roman general Bahan extols the virtues and strengths of the Roman Empire as compared to the Arabs during an exchange with the storied early *mujahid* Khalid b. al-Walid. In his response, Khalid begins by apparently undermining the distinction Bahan wants to draw between his own community and that of the Muslims:

> Bahan said, "'Praise God, who made our prophet the most excellent of the prophets, and our king the most

> excellent of the kings and our community the superior
> of the communities."
> And when he came to this place, Khalid . . . said,
> "Praise God who made us faithful to our prophet *and*
> your prophet and to the assembly of the prophets."[30]

The Muslim community, in other words, was not as different from the Christian Roman community as Bahan might like to think. Rather, it was kindred with the Christian Romans through its reverence of Jesus and the succession of prophets before him. This is a theme that recurs with some regularity in al-Azdi's text. Elsewhere, for example, al-Azdi depicts one Roman official, in conference with an Arab *mujahid*, complaining that the Muslims are unjust to attack their fellow monotheists, their fellow participants in the tradition of Abraham and the prophets: "Tell us why you think it just to fight us when you accept our prophets and our book," he demands.[31] Meanwhile, such early Muslim authors as Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110/728) drew upon the themes, plot, and characters of Jewish and Christian prophetic traditions as resources for situating Muhammad within a meta-narrative of sacred history familiar to members of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities scattered throughout the late ancient Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Mesopotamia. In one such tradition attributed to Wahb and a group of former Christians and/or Jews, for example, the lineage of the prophets is traced from Adam through Abraham and the family of David to Jesus, who would be the last prophet of the Children of Israel.[32] Jesus and Muhammad are then bound one to the other as Elisha prophesizes first Jesus' prophetic mission and then the appearance of the prophet Muhammad. "He said, 'He will come to you riding a donkey,' meaning 'Isa [Jesus] (Peace be upon him), 'and then, after him, one riding a camel [*Sahib al-gamal*] will come to you' meaning Muhammad (May God bless him and grant him peace)."[33] Elisha then enjoins the revelations of both of these prophets upon the Children of Israel.

Other traditions attributed to early Muslim authors further expounded upon the prophetic lineage that bound Jesus and Muhammad to the prophetic descendents of Abraham. These traditions feature a series of Christian monks, such Christian martyrs as George and the martyrs of Najran and the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. The Apostle Paul even appears within this prophetic meta-narrative in a role that in some ways parallels that of Rum son of Rum. Paul is cast as a vindictive Jewish persecutor of the Christian community who, worried that the misfortunes of the Christians would end on his own death, posed as a convert, disguised himself as a monk and led the Christian community into its mistaken

understandings of the prophet 'Isa's character and revelation. Thus it was only the machinations of two emblematic figures—the arrogant imperial tyrant Rum son of Rum and the malevolent deceiver Paul—whose character and actions had sown the seeds of conflict between the Christian Romans and the early Muslim *umma*.[34]

Thus, in such very early Muslim-authored texts as the *tafsir* of Muqatil b. Sulayman and the *Ta'rikh futuh al-Sham* of al-Azdi, Islam was not to be understood as an intruder in the world of the Romans. The Muslims, just as the Romans, were as a community the inheritors of an ancient prophetic lineage. Similarly, the appearance of Muslim armies in the lands of Rome and Persia was not to be understood as the eruption of an alien community into the history of the Roman world; rather, it was but another episode in an ancient narrative in which both communities were and had long been actors. This is signaled in al-Azdi's text by the figures of the Abrahamic prophets shared in common between the Muslims and the Romans. These prophets here become emblems of shared Roman and Muslim participation in this meta-narrative. This participation, moreover, had begun long before the Muslim armies appeared opposite the Roman armies on the plains of Syria. As we have seen, according to Muqatil b. Sulayman and other Muslim authors, the history of the primordial Muslim *umma* was bound inextricably to the history of the Romano-Persian world via a shared, mythic prophetic past and eventually via twin struggles of belief against unbelief, waged simultaneously in the eyes of God, and made visible on earth only to his last prophet.

According to this narrative of early Islamic history, the tragedy of the Romans was that they were unable to understand their place within this narrative, unable to comprehend the divinely ordered flow of events. This inability may be traced, in turn, to the imperial arrogance of the Romans, perhaps an inheritance from Rum son of Rum. Now, having returned to the worship of the God of Abraham, the Romans still bore the ancestral stain of vainglory and pride. These elements had mixed dangerously, moreover, with the Roman imperial conviction that they and their empire strove on behalf of the one God of Abraham and that this God had given the empire repeated victories over powerful enemies. Here, in another section of al-Azdi's account of the conquest of Syria, we return to the conversation of Khalid b. al-Walid and the Roman general Bahan, in which Khalid has just emphasized to Bahan that his community honors not only the prophet Muhammad but also Jesus and the lineage of Abrahamic prophets before him:

> [Khalid] said, "Praise God who made us faithful to our prophet *and* your prophet and to the assembly of the prophets, and who made

> the *amir* we appoint as head of our affairs a man like each one. Were he to allege that he was a king over us, we would remove him on our own authority and we do not think that he is better than any man of the Muslims, except that he is more reverent and pure in the eyes of God. And praise God who made our community command the right and forbid the wrong and destroy sin and apologize to God for it and know God and his boundary, and not to associate anything else with him. Little now is what remains to you."
>
> And Bahan's face grew pale and he recoiled a little and he said. "Praise God who puts us to the test, who is charitable in trials, who frees us from want, who lets us triumph over the nations and who makes us not to be despised. He restrains us from wrongdoing, and he does not expose our sacred places. But we are not proud nor rejoicing nor oppressing people, because God made us strong with our religion . . . but [what you demand] was demanded of us before you by [an enemy whose army] was more numerous than [yours]. They arranged a plan, and they gathered an army. Then we drove the army away from us and not one [of the enemy] remained with us except the killed or the captive. The Persians wanted [what you seek] from us but it has come to you what God, powerful and exalted, did to them, and the Turks too wanted that from us, but we met them with more force than the Persians. And people other than you of the east and the west who possessed power and glory and mighty armies had designs on us, and over all of them God granted us victory and set us over them, and you are not a great community in our appraisal . . . but rather the majority of you are herders of sheep and camels, and the people of rocks and stones and misery and you desire that we abandon our lands to you. Misery is what made you covetous of them, but we had thought that it would not bring you to our lands.[35]

Elsewhere in the same text, meanwhile, the Roman emperor Heraclius addresses a "gathering of the peoples of the lands [of Syria], the nobles of the Romans and whoever of the Arabs was of their religion." As he reassures and exhorts this gathering of his Christian subjects, Heraclius recalls that the God of Abraham has long looked after the Romans and provided them with victories over barbarous and proud unbelievers:

> People of this religion . . . God has inclined toward you and he has been a comfort and a benefactor toward this religion against peoples of the past, and against Kisra and the Magians and the Turks who were unknowing [i.e., who did not know the God of Abraham] and

> whoever among all of the nations were like them. That was because you knew the Book of your Lord and the *sunna* of your prophet whose commandments were reasoned and whose actions were rightly guided.[36]

For Muslim readers, the dramatic tension of this scene will have resided in the realization that the "barefoot, naked, and hungry" army of Arabs that Heraclius describes here as nothing more than the latest group of uppity barbarians due for a divinely aided thrashing at the hands of the Roman army was in fact itself an army of the same God who had in the past given the Romans so many victories over unbelieving enemies.[37] Indeed, the victory over Kisra and the Persians to which Heraclius refers in his speech was the victory that al-Azdi's contemporaries understood to have coincided with the Muslim victory at Badr, the battle in which a common Roman-Muslim struggle against polytheism became visible in the form of twin victories granted by the one God of both communities.

IV

Despite this history of shared holy war on behalf of the God of Abraham, one of these empires of God seems, in early Muslim accounts, to have carried within it the primordial flaw of imperial arrogance, one borne by the children of Esau until they were forced to bow down to the children of Ishmael. According to one Muslim source, this day of reckoning came as the Muslim armies swept into Syria and were confronted by Christian Roman imperial agents. One of those agents, we are told, met with the Arab warriors in an attempt to talk sense to them. He began by invoking the kinship that the Arabs, whom he noted were descended from Ishmael son of Abraham, shared with the Romans, the descendents of Esau, son of Isaac, the son of Abraham. Their prophetic ancestors had once divided up the world, this Roman imperial official went on to say, and the inheritance of the Romans was the empire they possessed, while the inheritance of the Arabs was that which they possessed. Finally, he explained that he and his fellow Romans understood that it was hardship alone that had driven the Arabs from their lands, and he offered to order good things for them, and suggested that then they should return to the lands from which they had come. His interlocutor, the Muslim commander 'Amr b. al-'As, replied by acknowledging the kinship he and his people shared with the Romans but then said that he and his fellow Muslims sought a more just redistribution of their shared patrimony; the Romans would trade half of their "rivers and buildings" for half of the "the thorns and stones" that made up the inheritance of the Arabs. This was not a proposal the Romans were prepared to accept, however, and

soon thereafter the Muslim armies won a decisive victory over the Roman forces at al-Yarmuk, expelling the Romans from Syria.[38]

The conquest of the lands of the eastern Roman empire, then, was to be understood not simply as a manifestation of the will of God, but as an episode within a series of prior episodes within which the Roman Empire and its territories had long been subsumed. Long before those communities knew of Muhammad or his *umma*, they had been inextricably tied to its history; the histories of Antioch, Damascus, Alexandria, and Amida had long been bound to the history of Mecca and Medina and Najran, even if the connections had been unseen by the Romans until it was too late.

For the early Muslim *umma*, then, the question of antiquity and antiquity's end was complicated by the complex imagined lineage of the *umma* itself. The evolving narrative of Islam's beginnings located the Prophet's advent, the collection of his community, and the eventual triumph of that community in accordance with two distinct points of reference. The struggle of Muhammad and his community against unbelief and idolatry in Arabia was believed to have taken place in the cultural and political context of the *jahiliyya*. The magnitude of the benefits of Islam could only be appreciated when measured against the darkness of the time of ignorance. This antiquity, however, brought to an end by the success of Islam, almost immediately became, like so many other antiquities, a bottomless resource for communal and imperial self-fashioning. Romantic, antiquarian recollections of this ancient past afforded Arabs who suddenly found themselves surrounded by the trappings of other, ancient and highly sophisticated cultures a cultural patrimony of their own upon which to base specifically Arab paideiac norms and in which to root claims to ethnic authenticity and political legitimacy.

Meanwhile, however, Muslim authors looked to another deep well of ancient tradition as a resource for rendering comprehensible the places of Islam and the Muslim *umma* within the history of the cultural and religious environment of the greater Middle East and Mediterranean. The antiquity of the Greeks and Romans had, for the Muslims of the first centuries after the conquests, come to its culmination with the advent of Muhammad's perfected monotheist community. This culmination was announced in part by the transformation of the Arabs from an abject, despised, imperially subjected people most notable for their impiety and loathsome mores into a militant monotheist empire whose defining imperative was to "command right and forbid wrong," much as the Romans had once done before their fall from grace.[39] This militant monotheist empire, our early Muslim authors suggested, brought to fulfillment a project that the Roman Empire, in its own fierce struggles against idolatry and unbelief, had

initiated. And yet somewhere within the essential character of the Romans, as it was imagined by early Muslim imperial authors, had been seated an implacable arrogance, one that blinded the Romans to their own place within an unfolding drama of revelation, revolution, and rebirth. It was this arrogance, our early Muslim sources seem to insist, that prevented the Roman imperial agents from recognizing the Arab bands they encountered in the first hours of the *futuh* as what they were, an army dispatched by the same God who armed and impelled Moses and David to remake the world in accordance with His law. It was the inherited *superbia* of Rum ibn Rum that intervened between the Muslims and their Christian brothers as, in the following scene from al-Azdi's history, Khalid b. Walid and the Roman general Bahan seem very close to finding common ground on the basis of their shared militant monotheism, only to have this possibility foreclosed by Bahan's reluctance to admit the possibility of a prophet from among the Arabs.

> Khalid (may God have mercy upon him!) said, "Praise God, other than whom there is no god" and he raised his hand to the heavens. Then [Bahan] said, "It is well what you have said." Then Khalid said, "And I bear witness that Muhammad is the Prophet of God, may God bless him and grant him peace."
>
> And when the translator interpreted this, for him Bahan said, "God knows. I do not know. Perhaps it is as you say." And the translator interpreted this for Khalid (may God have mercy upon him!).[40]

Bahan, of course, in the end fails to accept Muhammad and his revelation and chooses, to his own peril, the path of war. In fact, Bahan, as much as Khalid, may be understood as an actor in a drama whose narrative and plot had been laid down long before his birth. The impending destruction of his army was not the end of this story, nor the beginning of a new one. Rather, from the point of view of the Muslim authors who narrated his fate and the blossoming fortunes of their own community in the heady days of the first/seventh century, this was but another episode within an ancient narrative in which the Arabs and Romans, the Muslims and the Christians, the Children of Ishmael and the Children of Esau, had long been emplotted together, for better or for worse.

NOTES

1. H.A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore, 2000).
2. See, for example, the classic formulation of Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (New York, 1939).
3. Here and throughout, I have provided both *hijri* and Gregorian (AD or CE) dates. *Hijri* dates are reckoned on a lunar cycle from the *higra* or "migration" in 622 CE of the prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Yathrib (later Medina) to escape religious persecution. This event is treated as the beginning of the Islamic era.
4. Michael A. Sells, trans., *Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes* (Middletown, CT, 1989), 55-56, 60-61.
5. See, for example, Allen J. Frantzen and John D. Niles, *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity* (Gainesville, 1997), esp. Frantzen and Niles's "Introduction," 1-14; Billie Melman, "Claiming the Nation's Past: The Invention of an Anglo-Saxon Tradition," *Journal of Contemporary History* 26 (1991): 575-595; Donald A. White, "Changing Views of the *Adventus Saxonum* in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century English Scholarship," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32 (1971): 585-594.
6. See Rina Drory, "The Abbasid Construction of the Jahiliyya: Cultural Authority in the Making," *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996): 33-48, here 33-34.
7. Drory, "The Abbasid Construction of the Jahiliyya," 34.
8. *Risalat Ibn al-Munajjim*, 43-46, in Khalil Samir and Paul Nwyia, eds. and French transl., *Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne entre Ibn al-Munaǧǧim, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, et Qusta Ibn Luqa* (*Patrologia Orientalis* 40.4) (Turnhout, 1981), 571 [53].
9. ʿAbd Allah al-Azdi al-Basri, *Ta'rikh futuh al-Sham,* ed. ʿAbd al-Munʿim ʿAbd Allah ʿAmir (Cairo, 1970), 205. See also G. R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History* (Cambridge, 1999), 99-100
10. See Peter Heath, *The Thirsty Sword*: Sirat ʿAntar *and the Arabic Popular Epic* (Salt Lake City, 1996), 22-30; H. T. Norris, "Fables and Legends," in Julia Ashtiant, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, R. B. Serjeant, G. Rex Smith, eds., *ʿAbbasid Belles-Lettres* (Cambridge, 1990), 136-145; Drory, "The Abbasid Construction of the Jahiliyya."
11. For the language of the Bedouin as the basis for "classical Arabic," see C. Rabin, "The Beginnings of Classical Arabic," *Studia Islamica* 4 (1955): 19-37. For the conservatism of ʿAbbasid literary tastes and the corresponding preference for "pre-Islamic" forms, see M. M. Badawi, "Abbasid Poetry and Its Antecedents," in Ashtiant et al., eds., *ʿAbbasid Belles-Lettres*, 146-166, esp. 155-157. For the ambiguity of the Bedouin as representatives of a pre-Islamic "classical" past in medieval Muslim society, see Joseph Sadan, "An Admirable and Ridiculous Hero: Some Notes on the Bedouin in Medieval Arabic Belles Lettres, on a Chapter of Adab by al-Raghib al-Isfahani, and on a Literary Model in Which Admiration and Mockery Coexist," *Poetics Today* 10 (1989): 471-492.

12. See Drory, "The Abbasid Construction of the Jahiliyya."
13. al-Jahiz, *al-Radd 'ala al-Nasari* ("Against the Christians"), in *Rasa'il al-Jahiz,* ed. Muhammad Basil 'Uyun al-Saud, 4 vols. (Beirut, 2000), 3:238-239. For similar tendencies among other Abbasid-era authors, see Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 83-138, esp. 109-111.
14. For Qusta b. Luqa, see the introductory remarks and notes of Gerrit Bos, ed. and trans., *Qusta ibn Luqa's Medical Regime for the Pilgrims to Mecca: The* Risla fi tadbir safar al-hajj (Leiden, 1992).
15. For the Byzantine legend of the collection of the Homeric corpus, see Samir and Nwyia, *Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne entre Ibn al-Munaǧǧim, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, et Qusta Ibn Luqa* (PO 40.4), 441 [123], n. 53.
16. *Jawab Qusta b. Luqa*, 142-152, 208-216, in Samir and Nwyia, *Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne entre Ibn al-Munaǧǧim, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq et Qusta Ibn Luqa* (PO 40.4), 639-643 [121-125], 665-669 [147-151].
17. See also the lineage of paideia/*adab* that the ninth-century Iraqi Christian scholar, apologist, and caliphal client Hunayn b. Ishaq (d. 873) described in his *Adab al-falasifa*. The first to patronize *adab*, he says, were the kings of the Greeks "and others" (presumably the Romans), who had their sons trained in schools whose institutional descendents were Jewish temples, Christian churches, and Muslim mosques. In his description of *adab*'s origins, Hunayn, an inmate of Abbasid Baghdad's famous Bayt al-Hikma, emphasizes the role of the teachers of young princes in legitimating the eventual rule of their pupils by making of the young men apparently wise and cultured persons. Interestingly, in his description, Hunayn also collapses any distinction between Greco-Roman antiquity and his ninth-century present, and the central communal institutions of Christians, Muslims and Jews are assigned a common lineage. See Hunayn b. Ishaq, *Adab al-falasifa,* ed. 'Abd al-Rahman Badawi (Kuwait City, 1985), 51. For the Bayt al-Hikma, see Marie G. Balty-Guesdon, "Bayt al-Hikmah et politique culturelle du calife al-Mamun," *Medicina nei Secoli* 6 (1994): 275-291.
18. See Thomas Sizgorich, "'Do Prophets Come with a Sword?' Conquest, Empire, and Historical Narrative in the Early Islamic World," *American Historical Review* 112 (4) (2007): 993-1015. For "sites of memory," see Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-24.
19. See the important discussion of this *sura* in early works of Qu'ranic exegesis in Nadia Maria El Cheikh, "Surat al-Rum: A Study of Exegetical Literature," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118 (1998): 356-364, esp. 357-361; see also Nadia Maria El Cheikh, "Muhammad and Heraclius: A Study in Legitimacy," *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999): 5-21.
20. El Cheikh, "Surat al-Rum," 357-361, esp. 359-360.
21. Muqatil b. Sulayman, *Tafsir Muqatil b. Sulayman,* ed. Ahmad Farid, 3 vols. (Beirut, 2003), III. 3, 5f.
22. Translation: Ahmed Ali, *Al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation* (Princeton, 1993 [1984]), 343.
23. Muqatil b. Sulayman, *Tafsir Muqatil b. Sulayman,* ed. Farid, III. 5f.

24. Muqatil b. Sulayman, *Tafsir Muqatil b. Sulayman,* ed. Farid, III. 5-6. See El Cheikh, "Surat al-Rum," 359. The second-/eighth-century *tafsir* of Mujahid b. Jabr refers to the Roman victory as a victory of the "People of the Book over the People of Idols," although he does not connect the Roman success to the battle of Badr. See Mujahid b. Jabr, *Tafsir al-imam Mujahid b. Jabr,* ed. Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Abu al-Nil (Cairo, 1989), 538.
25. See Hud b. Muhakkam al-Hawwari, *Tafsir kitab Allah al-'aziz,* ed. Balhajj b. Sa'id Sharifi, 4 vols. (Beirut, 1990), III.314.
26. For al-Dahhak b. Muzahim, see Raif Georges Khoury, *Les légendes prophétiques dans l'Islam depuis le I^er^ jusqu'au III^e^ siècle de l'Hégire* (Wiesbaden, 1978), 100-102. For the association of Esau with Rome in rabbinic literature, see Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford, 1999), 2-6, 46-49. Gerson D. Cohen, "Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought," in Alexander Altmann, ed., *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (Cambridge, MA, 1967), 19-48.
27. For al-Khidr, see Patrick Franke, *Begegnung mit Khidr: Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im traditionellen Islam* (Beirut, 2000); Irfan Omar, "Khidr in the Islamic Tradition," *Muslim World* 83 (1993): 279-294; Ismail Albayrak, "The Classical Exegetes' Analysis of the Qur'anic Narrative 18:60-82," *Islamic Studies* 42 (2003): 289-315; Brandon M. Wheeler, "The Jewish Origins of Qur'an 18: 65-82? Reexamining Arent Jan Wensinck's Theory," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118 (1998): 153-171.
28. Abu Rifa'a 'Umara b. Wathima b. Musa b. al-Furat al-Farisi al-Fasawi, *Kitab bad' al-halq wa-qisas al-anbiya',* in Raif Georges Khoury, ed., *Les légendes prophétiques dans l'Islam*, 20-24.
29. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs,* 35-39.
30. al-Azdi, *Ta'rikh futuh al-Sham*, 202.
31. al-Azdi, *Ta'rikh futuh al-Sham*, 118.
32. The traditionalists with whom Wahb reports are described as "party of the *ahl al-'ilm* (roughly 'the knowledgeable ones') who had left the *ahl al-kitab* ('the People of the Book')." See al-Farisi, *Kitab bad' al-halq wa-qisas al-anbiya',* ed. Khoury, 299:9-10.
33. See al-Farisi, *Kitab bad' al-halq wa-qisas al-anbiya',* ed. Khoury, 299-300. The text explains that although Jesus became known as "the donkey rider" (paired here and elsewhere in the text with Muhammad as *sahib al-gamal*, "the camel rider"), he only rode the donkey once, apparently because possession of the donkey conflicted with his ascetic nature. The text explains that Jesus was a wandering ascetic, clothed only in hair, eating only barley, sleeping "wherever the night sheltered him." On resurrection day, the text continues, Jesus will be the head of the ascetics (*ra's nasikin*).
34. See Abu Bakr Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Ta'rikh al-anbiya',* ed. Asya Kuliban 'Ali al-Barh (Beirut, 2004), (Paul) 339-340, 405-406; (Seven Sleepers/*Ashab al-kahf*) 341-351; (Jarij the monk) 385-386; (Martyrs of Najran/*Ashab al-ukhdud*) 394-396; (George) 397-404. These stories are attributed variously to such very early traditionalists as Ibn al-'Abbas (d. 68/687), Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110/728), and al-Dahhak b. Muzahim (d. 105/723?).
35. al-Azdi, *Ta'rikh futuh al-Sham*, 202-203.

36. al-Azdi, *Ta'rikh futuh al-Sham*, 28.
37. See in particular the comments of Lawrence I. Conrad, "Heraclius in Early Islamic Kerygma," in Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte, eds., *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation* (Leuven, 2002), 113-156.
38. Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'rikh madinat Dimashq,* ed. 'Umar b. Gharama al-'Amrawi and 'Ali Shiri, 80 vols. (Beirut, 1995-2001), 2. 81-2**.** On Ibn 'Asakir as a source for early Islamic history, see James E. Lindsay, ed., *Ibn 'Asakir and Early Islamic History* (Princeton, 2001).
39. In the *Futuh al-Jazira* of pseudo-Waqidi, which poses as a very early text but most likely dates to around the time of the First Crusade, a stylite explains that the Muslim conquests have come upon the Romans because they have fallen away from the monotheist piety demanded of them by their prophet. "You used to command right and forbid wrong," he tells them, "and you would refuse misdeeds and you spoke of the truth. And you kept your laws and you refrained yourselves from eating what was forbidden" (*al-haram*). Now, however, the arrogant misdeeds of the Romans have brought upon them the wrath of God in the form of the Arab army. Pseudo-Waqidi, *Ta'rikh futuh al-Jazira wa-' l-khabur wa-diyar bakr wa-'l-'Iraq,* ed. 'Abd al-'Aziz Fiyad Harfush (Damascus, 1996), 90-91.
40. al-Azdi, *Ta'rikh futuh al-Sham*, 204.

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6

SPIRITUAL LANDSCAPES: THE LATE ANTIQUE DESERT IN IRELAND

Jim Tschen Emmons

In Adomnán's *Life of St. Columba* we are told that Colum Cille made the following prophecy: "Today again Cormac has set sail from the district of Erris, beyond the river Moy, desiring to find a place of retreat."[1] This was one of three attempts that Cormac Ua Liatháin made to find a "retreat" on the ocean. What is significant about Cormac is not his failure to find a retreat over the waves but his effort to set sail several times.[2] The words Adomnán used in describing the goal of Cormac's quest, *herimum* and *desertum*, were highly charged and meant more than an "isolated place" or "wasteland."[3] Literati all over the late antique world read in these words the connotation of spiritual training, communion with God, and the landscape of sanctity.[4]

The search of Irish saints for a solitary place has its origins in the sands of late antique Egypt and Syria, where Christian anchorites first sought the desert to be alone with God. H. A. Drake, in his exploration of the social and political coup Roman Christians achieved in the fourth century and beyond, singled out holy men like Daniel the Stylite as emblematic of the period. Unkempt, but powerful, these men were, as Drake reminds us, symbols around which "the Christian community defined itself."[5] When Christianity came to wetter climates, the concept of the holy man came with it, as did the concept of the desert, which, given the northern climate, applied more generally to woodlands, swamps, and other wastelands. For example, both St. Martin and St. Romanus, a Jura Father, found the desert in the forests or mountains of Gaul.[6] In early Christian Ireland holy men such as St. Áed mac Bricc likewise sought the desert and these sites served as gathering points for the Christian community.[7]

The landscape in which Áed served God was not exclusively a wasteland but a sacred space; it was where the saint interacted with the faithful, combated evil, converted non-Christians, and miraculously manipulated space and reality. Despite the easy contrasts we often make between the faithful around the Mediterranean and the outer reaches of the Christian world, the *Life of St. Áed mac Bricc* demonstrates how effectively the function of the holy man and his desert were absorbed by other cultures. The Irish were one of many peoples who adapted the Mediterranean concept of the desert as spiritual landscape to fit local conditions. While late antique notions of the desert are at play in the *Vita Aidi*, so too are elements from the native narrative tradition, especially the "otherworld" motif that overlaps imported ideas about spiritual landscapes. In shaping the landscape, and especially in naming it through miracle, Irish saints not only created a more Christian world but participated in a larger mythologization of the late antique desert as exemplified by saints Antony, Martin, and others.

Late antique writers defined the "desert" not only as a "wilderness" but as an "archetype."[8] It was home both to anchorites and communities of monks; however, it was ascetics such as St. Antony who were foremost in the mind of writers. Antony was *the* model of the desert saint, the model for Gaul's father of monasticism, St. Martin of Tours, who in turn inspired many of the writers of Irish hagiography.[9] For Athanasius, the author of the *Vita Antonii*, the desert was holy ground, one that tested and trained the holy man and one that witnessed the triumph of God through the success of his solitary devotees.[10] In the *Vita* Antony continually searched for more remote locations, moving first to the mountain at Pispir, but eventually settling in an abandoned fort where he continued his ascetic practice in the deeper desert. Athanasius describes Antony and his imitators as occupied with their holy duty in a land "apart."[11]

For Athanasius, this land "set by itself" was different from the normal world and normal deserts by virtue of its religious activity. Obeying the voice from above, Antony soon left for the upper Thebaid as his fame was making solitude difficult.[12] There he found a spot where:

> At the foot of the mountain ran a clear spring, whose waters were sweet and very cold; outside there was a plain and a few uncared-for palm trees. Antony then, as it were, moved by God, loved the place, for this was the spot which he who had spoken with him by the banks of the river had pointed out.[13]

When Athanasius finishes his description, we see not so much a desert as an oasis. Even here, as Athanasius shows, Antony still had to deal with

petitioners. The saint had his solitude, but, as Athanasius reminds his readers, the saint was still available to those in need and was even willing to leave his retreat and defend orthodoxy when the Arian controversy came to a head.

Eucherius of Lyon, and later of Lérins, did much to make popular the notion of the monastery as a kind of desert.[14] Yet the voice of Eucherius was one of a chorus. John Cassian (died c. 435), a contemporary, viewed the desert in much the same way, but then he had actually lived in both Egypt and Bethlehem.[15] His *Conferences*, using the example of twenty-four Egyptian "fathers," detailed the daily life of the ideal Egyptian monk.[16] Cassian recommended that the monk live first in a community before venturing into a desert of his own. Along with this advice was the counsel that such a desert initially be not far from other anchorites. To be totally alone exposed the monk to the possible dangers of madness, eccentricity, or "moral collapse."[17]

James Goehring has provided an important caveat about taking late antique proponents of the desert too literally. He has demonstrated that most Pachomian monks, for example, lived near settlements, though the literary genre of hagiography would have us see it otherwise.[18] Most Pachomian sites were situated within settled areas of the Nile valley.[19] The *Vita Antonii* produced the idea that Egyptian monasticism was a "desert movement," and since Pachomian monasteries were in Egypt they too must have been a desert movement (with the understanding that "desert" here means the deep desert).[20]

Goehring's conclusion has important consequences for the study of anchorites elsewhere in the Christian world, for had these solitaries succeeded in finding a true desert, then most likely we should never have heard of them. Some holy men no doubt did find such a place. Those nameless Irish monks remembered only as *papa* in Iceland are one such example.[21] Goehring's conclusion would seem to hold true for Áed as well: Enach Midbren, Áed's major cell, was not so remote that he could not assist others.[22] The very name of Áed's cell, Enach Midbren, is significant as well. The term *enach* means "swamp or lake" and lends Áed's cell a "desert" quality.

The idea that Pachomian monasteries were not so far removed from settled areas does not preclude this sort of monasticism from desert spirituality. More than half of the *Vita Aidi* contains episodes where Áed is traveling to help someone or to meet with other anchorites.[23] Very often he is in a "remote land" when he sees in spirit the distress of some believer. Miracle characterized most of these journeys, too, which argues strongly for the idea that Áed traveled in miracular, supernatural space.

Áed was one of probably many coenobitic monks, such as Julian Saba, who journeyed great distances.[24]

For the literati of Late Antiquity the "desert" was more than a wasteland. It was both a holy place where saints communed with God and a place where they fought demons. As Derwas Chitty has pointed out, the desert monks themselves seem to have been aware of the dichotomy, but the "love of place" most often seems to have won out. In sum, this love of place meant reveling in God's creation, in a place beautiful, unadorned by the hand of man and thus perfect for communion with the Creator. Antony not only compared a monk out of the desert to a fish out of water but also stated to a philosopher "My book, O philosopher, is the nature of created things, and it is present when I will, for me to read the words of God."[25] This is an important aspect of the desert and its meaning for the literati of Late Antiquity, including the Irish whose men of letters penned many poems about the world as God's canvas.[26] The *Amra Choluimb Chille* of Dallán Forgaill, for example, a poem in praise of St. Colum Cille, highlights this connection:

> He ran the course which runs past hatred to right action.
> The teacher wove the word.
> By his wisdom he made glosses clear.
> He fixed the Psalms,
> he made known the books of Law,
> those books Cassian loved.[27]

Dallán's mention of Cassian in a literary composition illustrates the literary cachet of the desert and monastic life.

Thomas O'Loughlin has described sacred space as having the "imprint of the divine," a place "manifested in the ordinary world in special places and persons, and one entered through imitation and liturgy." [28] In discussing the role that tombs play in this miraculous parallel world, O'Loughlin says that for authors like Adomnán of Iona these places might "be ultimately contiguous with Adomnán's island in that one could travel to them, but as worlds they are apart, qualitatively different as places, as the saint is qualitatively different as a man."[29]

Though this world might not be found in everyday places, being as it is a world of the miraculous, one could access it through the imitation of holy men and in the liturgy as well as by going to certain locations. Such a desert did not need to be full of sand; so long as it was remote, unsettled, and apart, it was ideal for a holy man. The desert could even be one of the mind for that matter as it was the activity of those who sought it out as a place better to know and please God that made it into something holy.[30]

This is perhaps the prime reason that among all of the ideas that belonged to the culture of Late Antiquity, the concept of the desert and its holy men had the widest currency in hagiography.

The saint's desert might also have an unknown, ambiguous, even dark quality. Such space may be holy space on one level, not always clearly in a Christian sense, but it is dangerous territory on another level. The desert was not only a place that "provided separation from the world," but a "place where one confronted the Devil and the demons of the human heart."[31] Cassian viewed the desert as the natural setting for anchorites: they, "having perfectly overcome all their faults, in order to engage in the fiercest battles with the demons, enter the deepest recesses of the desert."[32] Such language, depicting the desert as a place not only to find God but also to combat His enemies, was not restricted to saintly *vitae* but appeared in other genres of the early medieval period as well.[33] For example, the monster Grendel in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* is a prime example of the connection between outlawry and wilderness. One sees this connection too in Irish tradition, perhaps best typified by the heroic outlaw Finn mac Cumaill.[34]

Finn is one of the greatest of the ancient Irish heroes, on a par with the precocious Cú Chulainn of the Ulster Cycle of tales; as an outlaw (a *fénnid*) he is an outsider, an extralegal figure, one who wars, hunts, and lives outside of "normal" society. Though best known as colorful characters of literature, the *fénnidi* "reflect a dimly visible social reality, namely, some institutionalized form of extra-social life, or what we can call 'outlawry.'"[35] Though Irish saints often take on attributes of the hero, such as Áed's prowess as a charioteer, they usually appear as antagonists of figures like the *fénnidi*. Áed and the members of a *fían* (war-band) may both occupy liminal spaces, but whether they shared any other narrative ancestors is impossible to demonstrate.[36]

While exemplars such as the *Life of Martin* by Sulpicius Severus, the Latin translation of the *Life of Antony* by Evagrius, and the works of Jerome and Gregory the Great, to name just a few, helped shape the desert in Ireland, so too did native Irish tradition.[37] Much of the spiritual landscape in Irish saints lives owed something to the "otherworld" motif that often appears in many later Irish stories.[38] While there are few early sources that mention the otherworld, it seems clear that the early Irish literati were familiar with the concept. This otherworld occupied a liminal space, one sometimes underground, or across or even under the sea, or in a wood, hill, or any unsettled, wild place. The otherworld was sometimes seen as the source of poetic inspiration or esoteric types of knowledge, and given the monk's spiritual power, a gift he shared with the poet in Irish tradition, it seems likely that the otherworld material influenced the

Irish conception of the desert, the Christian wasteland *par excellence*.[39] Comparable evidence from elsewhere in the Christian world, particularly the connection between the power of early Egyptian monks, "magicians," and liminal spaces, further suggests that the Irish example was less exotic than it might first appear.[40] There was considerable crossover mythically speaking—native ideas could blend easily with hagiography's own mythic elements.[41] Given the often fantastic nature of Áed's adventures—this is after all a saint who often flies a chariot over treetops—the *Vita Aidi* provides an excellent window into this Irish concept of spiritual landscapes.

What we know of St. Áed mac Bricc comes largely from the extant recensions of his *Vita*.[42] Áed, if he actually did live, is believed to have died somewhere between 589 and 595, according to the *Annals of Ulster*.[43] His obit, then, places him in Ireland's "Age of Saints," which started with the missions of Palladius and Patrick in the mid-fifth century and continued well into the eighth with Columbanus.[44] The pattern of the *Vita* is typical of late antique saints lives and in some respects follows the plan of *The Life of St. Martin*. Like Martin of Tours (c. 316-397), with whom he shares not a few similarities, Áed led a secular life for some time, and the *Vita* suggests that he was destined for a career as a warrior. Áed left secular life after meeting Illann, the bishop who became his spiritual guide.

Most of the *Vita* after the foundation of Áed's own cell relates to the various miracles that Áed performed: healing the sick, making his chariot fly, raising the dead, producing food, righting injustice, and bringing sinners to repentance. Áed also kept saintly company, for he visited some of the most celebrated early Irish saints, notably Brigit, Brendan, Ciarin. After Áed dies, he confounds a relic hunter, takes a sinner to heaven, and is remembered by Colum Cille, saint, poet, and a prince of the northern Uí Néill.

Several sources tie Áed to the southern Uí Néill, specifically to the Cenél Fíachach, a minor branch of this powerful northern family, so perhaps it is not surprising that Àed, like most noble young men, would have been destined for the sword rather than the crozier.[45] Traditionally St. Áed has been associated with two sites, Cell-áir, modern Killare in Westmeath, and Slíab-liac, the promontory Slieve League situated on the north side of Donegal Bay.[46] Devotion to the saint survived at Killare into the modern period, and in the case of Slieve League, it continues to survive. Aed's Life, however, does not mention either of these locations but two other sites: Enach Midbren, his cell in Munster, and Ráith Aedo, in Westmeath.[47]

The *Vita Aidi*, not unlike the *Life of Antony*, illustrates its subject's increasing withdrawal from our world into a mythic, miraculous space.

Áed's foray into the desert begins in earnest when his mentor, the bishop Illann, sends him out on his own. Illann, recognizing the significance of the saint's early miracles, orders Áed to establish a cell for himself. The budding saint is not told to enter an existing community but to found one. Whatever the reality might have been behind this story in his *Vita*, it is clear that the author wished to set Áed up as an independent monk, a solitary, one who gathered a community rather than one who entered one.

For the most part, the desert functions as a place for solving problems, those of Áed or those of his supplicants. Áed travels to, through, and over forests and bogs, and thus over the border between our world and the spiritual one of the desert, to resolve these problems. There are also times when he manipulates space without leaving our world. Áed's desert was not the scene of combat with demons, but the holy man did expose the horrors of demons to sinners in order to persuade them of a different course of action. For example, in chapter thirty-four of the Life, Áed confronted a king, Baiethene, about releasing a bond-maid. When the king refused to release the girl, Áed struck a bargain with him, saying, "If I show you a vision of the [Devil] repeating the same statement that you are saying to me, will you release the girl to me?" The king answered, "If I see a vision of him, I shall release her." Áed warned him that he would be unable to face the devil. The king nonetheless assured the saint that he could do so. Áed made the sign of the cross over him and the evil spirit appeared. Terrified, the king and his retinue became as if dead, reviving only through the saint's prayers. True to his word, the king released the girl.[48]

There are two chapters in which Áed performs such a miracle. In the example above, Áed, in parting the veil between our world and hell to reveal an apparition of the devil, manipulates time and space in his desert to resolve a problem. The second example is different in that Áed does not reveal an apparition to solve a problem but to satisfy the curiosity of a man who wanted to see the apparition.[49] The emphasis in this second example would seem to be Áed's miracle rather than his help, but in both examples it is clear that the saint is able to traverse, or at least manipulate, the landscape in which he operates.

Forests, not surprisingly given Ireland's heavily wooded terrain at the time, constitute many of the deserts that Áed travels to in order help others and perform miracles. On one occasion, Áed encountered two lepers while traveling through the wood of Elo. Out of charity the saint gave his own horses to them. Áed told his companions that they would soon meet two other men who would offer them new horses. Not long afterward, the men arrived and gave the saint their wild horses.[50] Here again the saint performs a miracle, for once he harnessed the wild horses

to his chariot, they became tame. (He does not, however, heal the lepers, which we might have expected.)

As with many of the saint's deeds, this example of Áed's charity is situated in a "desert" setting. The focus of the episode is not only miracle but also charity and the reward for that charity. The forest of Elo (or Fith Ihle, as it is sometimes rendered) is mentioned in two chapters of the Life and serves as one specific location in which Áed carries out his holy duties. The *Vita* also ties this forest to another saint, St. Colmán Elo mac Beodgna who established a cell there, thereby further identifying the wood of Elo as a spiritual landscape.[51]

Forests are not the only desert in the *Vita*. On several occasions in the Life, Áed performed God's work in or around swamps or bogs. The most dramatic example is when the saint actually moved a swamp from one location into another.[52] Evil men lived on an island in this swamp and refused to leave it.[53] Áed told them that if they did not obey him he would make their swamp fly away, leaving them exposed.[54] One night the swamp left them, landing in a field in Connaught, and the men fled. Thereafter the swamp was known as the "Night Swamp." Áed's ability to effect a miracle is so great that he can remake the land itself, even effecting the conversion of an evil location. The new name of the swamp reflects the miracle, but it also makes good a place previously associated with evil. The next chapter of the *Vita* provides evidence for this claim.

On the day before the swamp landed in Connaught, the prophet Béc mac Dé told those present: "Beware lest something happen to you in that land in the following night. For a swamp shall come on that night into this land, by the power of Saint Áed of God."[55] Attributing the miracle to the saint himself rather than to the saint as an agent of God may seem irregular, but Béc, described as *propheta* in the text, may not be a regular prophet: elsewhere he is referred to as a druid.[56] If the author of the *Vita* intended to depict Béc ambiguously—and *propheta* could refer to either a Christian or a pagan prophet—then Béc's declaration about Áed's feat may be evidence that Áed is reordering the land and making it more Christian. The congress between Christian and pagan, given what we know of Constantine's achievement in creating a religiously neutral space in the Roman world, among other arenas, is really not so surprising.[57] The Irish too debated the relationship between faith and the pagan past, and like many intellectuals around the Mediterranean, they often found that the two could coexist.[58]

These Irish writers seem to have been especially attentive to details of terrain, providing names for many spots that saints visited. Assuming that these forests and swamps existed and were known by these names, the reader or listener would then have a physical link to the saint's miracles.

Another reason for this interest in naming the landscape was to give Christian meaning to places that had originally been non-Christian. In the *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, for example, Patrick's Cross, a church, was erected on or near the Druid's Stone, the site where the saint had destroyed a druid in a contest for supremacy.[59] This topographic explanation evidences a common phenomenon. Joseph Nagy has described this "detailed memorialization of event by means of place and place-name" as "one of the most widespread tendencies of medieval Irish literature."[60] He explains: "To be of lasting fame and value, according to the implications of this episode of the *Tripartite Life* and other works, the new religion must generate new place-names or at least somehow incorporate the existing place-name lore [*dindshenchas*] into its worldview."[61]

Given the preponderance of place-naming in the Irish Lives it is safe to say that Christianizing the landscape was one concern for the authors of these saints lives. The Irish intelligentsia of the early Christian and medieval eras seem to have had a general interest in place-names and topographic lore. Perhaps the most well known of these are works such as the *Dindshenchas* ("place-name lore") from the Middle-Irish period, a collection of verse and prose explaining the naming of features in the Irish landscape.[62]

Another possible reason for this interest has been suggested by Thomas O'Loughlin. In looking at the *De Locis Sanctis* of Adomnán, O'Loughlin found evidence that this piece full of place-name lore for Christian holy sites is more than the "literary curiosity" that most have held it to be.[63] He argues that Adomnán, following St. Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, intended this work to provide the monks with a better understanding of the places mentioned in the Bible. One had to have some knowledge of the languages, but one also had to have knowledge of the "things which act as signs."[64] Place-names can act as such signs, and O'Loughlin quotes Augustine's own example of the Pool at Siloam to illustrate the point. This pool, which the Bible glosses as "sent," takes on added significance for the reader in understanding why Christ *sent* the blind man to that particular place.[65]

Augustine also made a distinction between the interpretative skills of description and narration: the first deals with mundane matters whereas the second refers to all the types of knowledge one needed to understand the Scriptures. At the pinnacle of narration is "knowledge of places." To understand the significance of places, then, is to gain "access to divine truth."[66] O'Loughlin suggests that Adomnán took Augustine's advice to heart and used the sources he had available (such as Jerome's *Onomastica*) to explain the places that one would come across most in biblical study.[67]

Not every reference in *De Locis Sanctis* serves such a purpose, but the elucidation of religious knowledge through an understanding of place-names does seem to have been one reason for the text.

Given O'Loughlin's conclusions for the uses of topography in Irish texts such as the *De Locis Sanctis*, it is possible that the place-names in the saints lives served a similar purpose. In the examples discussed here, many of the spots were named: the monastery of Enach Midbren and the wood of Elo or Fith Ihle. Each of these examples pinpoints Áed in a place for a specific reason. These locations may have served as potential lessons: of devotion in entering the monastic life, of charity to the unfortunate, and of humility before God's awesome power as demonstrated by his saints and as experienced by the observer.[68]

Landscapes in the Lives combined multiple layers of meaning. On the one hand, they could be didactic, helping the reader understand the deeper significance in a particular event, the location's relationship to similarly charged sites or to holier exemplars from Scripture; Jerusalem has Siloam, Áed's territory the Night Swamp. On the other hand, the importance placed on topography underlines the self-conscious Christianization of land recently non-Christian or, in some cases, still non-Christian. The spiritual landscape of the desert saint, wherever he might be, highlights the liminality inherent not only in the person of the saint but also in land religiously ambiguous.

It is natural that Áed travel through forests and swamps, for Ireland in the early Christian period was a thickly wooded island. Yet it is clear that in terms of narrative the saint's forests and fens serve as his desert, as the spiritual landscape in which he does God's will. Áed can even manipulate time and space to reveal visions of hell. In such liminal places, the saint, who himself is half way between two worlds, is able to live his life for God and perform wonders. The spiritual landscape of the desert was also the meeting place for two other worlds, the late antique Mediterranean and early Christian Ireland. The Christian concept of the desert was a point of contact between the Irish and their literate Christian brethren in the late empire. Áed's desert, though it was not arid and full of sand, was nonetheless spiritually akin to the sands of the Thebaid, where the voice by the river bade Antony go.

NOTES

1. Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (London, 1995), 118, 196-198. See also the notes 266, 280-281,341-342. Adomnán (d. 704) was the ninth abbot of Iona. His subject, Colum Cille (d. 597), better known as

Columba, was and remains one of the chief saints of the Irish. A prince of the northern Uí Néill, Colum Cille was the founder of the monastery on Iona and a major political and religious figure both in Ireland and in northern Britain. King Bridei (fl. 558) was the powerful ruler of Pictland who appears in the Life.

2. Even as late as the ninth century, long after Cormac, Irish pilgrims sought God in remote places, such as the three Irishmen who washed up on the shores of Cornwall in 891 in a boat without oars. See *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. and ed. G. N. Garmonsway (London, 1994), 82.
3. Alan and Marjorie Anderson, *Adomnán's Life of Columba* (Oxford, 1991), 28-31.
4. For the concept of the desert as a spiritual landscape see, for example, Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York, 1993); Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Crestwood, 1966), 6; D. Fisher, "Liminality: The Vocation of the Church (I): The Desert Image in Early Christian Tradition," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 24 (1989): 181-205; James E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg, 1999); James E. Goehring, "Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5 (1) (1997): 61-84; William Harmless, S.J., *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford, 2004); Jennifer L. Hevelone-Harper, *Disciples of the Desert: Monks, Laity, and Spiritual Authority in Sixth-Century Gaza* (Baltimore, 2005); Jean Leclercq, "'Eremus' et 'Eremita': Pour l'histoire du vocabulaire de la vie solitaire," *Collecteana Cisterciensia* 25 (1963): 8-30; Mark Vessy, "The Demise of the Christian Writer and the Remaking of 'Late Antiquity': From H.-I. Marrou's Saint Augustine (1938) to Peter Brown's Holy Man (1983)," *JECS* 6 (3) (1998): 377-411.
5. H. A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore, 2000), 461. For Daniel, see the following chapter.
6. For Martin, see *Sulpitius Severus Vincent of Lérins and John Cassian*, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2d ser., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, 1964), *Vita Martini* § 7. See also James E. Goehring, "The Dark Side of the Landscape: Ideology and Power in the Christian Myth of the Desert," in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (3) (2003): 437-451; this article may also be found in Dale B. Martin and Patricia Cox Miller, eds., *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies: Gender, Asceticism, and Historiography* (Durham, NC, 2005). For the Jura Fathers, namely, abbots Romanus, Lupicinus, and Eugendus, the spiritual founders of the community, see especially Tim Vivian, Kim Vivian, and Jeffrey Burton Russell, in *The Lives of the Jura Fathers*, ed. John Leinenweber, Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 178 (Kalamazoo, 1999), 102-105; see also Isabel Moreira, *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca, 2000), 68.
7. For St. Áed mac Bricc, see James B. Tschen Emmons, "The Limits of Late Antiquity: The Life of St. Áed mac Bricc and the Irish Literati in Late Antiquity" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002). For

the full translation of Áed's *Vita*, see 138-174; see also "Vita S. Aidi Episcopi Killariensis," in W.W. Heist, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Brussels, 1965), 167-181; Charles Plummer, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae: Partim Hactenus Ineditae ad Fidem Codicum Manuscriptorum Recognovit Prolegomenis Notis Indicibus Instruxit*, Vol. 1 (Clarendon, 1910), 34-45.

8. *Jura Fathers*, 32-33.
9. The impact of the cult of St. Martin among the Irish was profound. See Brüning, "Adomnans Vita Columbae und ihre Ableitungun," in *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 11 (1917): 244-256; Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba* (Dublin, 1996), 130, 137-138, 140-141, 149, 173; Sharpe, *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, 366 n. 379.
10. Examples from the *Vita Antonii* (hereafter *VAn*) are taken from "The Life of Antony," in *Athanasius' Select Works and Letters*, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2d ser., vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, 1891), 195-221. For more on Antony, see for example Athanasius, *Vita Beati Antonii Abbatis* (Patrologia Latina 73, ed. J.-P. Migne [Turnholt, 1977]). See also Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*, 393. His twenty-month exile in Gaul, one of many, began in 335. Athanasius met Antony on at least one occasion in 338.
11. *VAn* 208, section 44.
12. *VAn* 209, section 49.
13. *VAn* 209, section 49-50.
14. Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), 160. See also *Jura Fathers*, 34-36, 38, 187-196, 197-215. See also Ralph Mathisen, "Episcopal Hierarchy and Tenure in Office in Late Roman Gaul: A Method for Establishing Dates of Ordination," *Francia* 17 (1990): 125-138; *Jean Cassien: Conférences*, Sources Chrétiennes 42, 54, and 64 (Paris, 1955-59) 2:98; Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich* (Munich, 1965), 68.
15. John Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Colm Luibheid, ed. John Farina, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York, 1985), 1.
16. Ibid., 2, 5. See also *Sulpitius Severus Vincent of Lérins and John Cassian*, 201-290 (*Institutes*), 293-545 (*Conferences*).
17. *Conferences*, 5.
18. James E. Goehring, "Withdrawing from the Desert: Pachomius and the Development of Village Monasticism in Upper Egypt," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1) (1996): 267-285.
19. Goehring, "Withdrawing from the Desert," 268.
20. Ibid.
21. See Sharpe's translation of Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, 280-281. The Icelandic writer Ari corroborates the evidence in Adomnán and Dícuil: see Jesse Byock, *Viking Age Iceland* (London, 2001), 11, 90-91; for Ari Thorgilsson see 95-98; for Dícuil, see Dicuili, *Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae*, ed. J. J. Tierney, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, vol. 6 (Dublin, 1967), 1-33, 44-103.
22. My reading of the *Vita* suggests Enach Midbren as the saint's principal site, though he had others that have been named as candidates as well. For Rahugh (Ráith Áeda maic Bricc), see Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organization in Ireland, A.D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth, 1999), 95, and T. M. Charles-Edwards,

Early Christian Ireland (Cambridge, 2000), 149-150; For Killare, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 150, and for both Killare and Slieve League, see James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical: An Introduction and Guide* (New York, 1929; repr. with corrections, New York:, 1966), 393. See *VA* § 7 for Enach Midbren and *VA* § 48 for what might be Ráith Aedo.

23. Áed travels in 21 of the 52 chapters of the Life. See also *VA* § 11-15, 19-24, 30, 31, 34, 40, 42, and 45-49.
24. For the *Life of Julian Saba,* see Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, trans. R. M. Price (Kalamazoo, 1985), 23-36; see section § 17 of the *Life of Julian Saba*. Julian traveled to Antioch to battle Arian heretics.
25. Evagrius Ponticus, *Practica ad Anatolinm* 92 (Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 40 [Paris]), 1249B; Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 6.
26. For the highly literate aspect of this "nature" poetry, see Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh, 1995), introduction; Donnchadh Ó Corráin "Early Irish Hermit Poetry?" in *Sages, Saints, and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carneys*, Liam Breatnach, Donnchadh Ó Corráin, and Kim McCone, eds. (Maynooth, 1989), 251-267; for some examples of the genre, see Gerard Murphy, ed. and trans., *Early Irish Lyrics: Eighth to Twelfth Century*, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1962).
27. Clancy and Márkus, *Iona,* 107-109. See also chap. 2, pp. 47-48. Dallán was one of the chief poets of the late sixth century. His tribute to Colum Cille is one of the oldest surviving pieces in Irish.
28. Thomas O'Loughlin, "The Tombs of the Saints," in *Saints and Scholars,* ed. Máire Herbert, John Carey, and Pádraig Ó Riain (Dublin, 2001), 2-3.
29. Ibid., 3.
30. The ascetic ideal exemplified in the desert was attractive not only to those who lived in more rural locales but also to at least some urbane bishops. See Neil McLynn, "A Self-made Holy Man: The Case of Gregory Nazianzen," in *JECS* 6 (3) (1998): 463-483.
31. *Jura Fathers*, 33.
32. *Jura Fathers*, 33, quoting Cassian. See John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium vitiorum remediis libri XII*, trans. and annotated by Boniface Ramsey, Ancient Christian Writers, no. 58 (New York, 2000), 5:36.
33. See *Beowulf*, trans. Seamus Heaney (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2000) 9 (lines 102-108). See also Colin Chase, ed., *The Dating of Beowulf* (Toronto, 1982); Robert Hanning, "Beowulf and Anglo-Saxon Poetry," *European Writers: The Middle Ages and the Renaissance, I: Prudentius to Medieval Drama*; *II: Petrarch to Renaissance Short Fiction*, ed. William T. H. Jackson (New York, 1983), 51-87; Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven, 1989); John D. Niles, *Beowulf: The Poem and Its Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983); Katherine O'Brian O'Keefe, "Beowulf, lines 702b-836: Transformations and the Limits of the Human," *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 23 (1981): 484-494; Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Rochester, 2005); J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Monsters and the Critics, and Other Essays*,

ed. Christopher Tolkien (Boston, 1984). For the possible connection between Irish literature and *Beowulf,* see James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, 77-128; J. F. Nagy, "Beowulf and Fergus: Heroes of Their Tribes?" in *Connections between Old English and Medieval Celtic Literature*, ed. Patrick K. Ford and Karen Borst, Old English Colloquium Series 2 (Berkeley, 1983), 31-44; R. Mark Scowcroft, "The Irish Analogues to Beowulf," *Speculum* 74 (1) (1999): 22-64.

34. *Fénnidecht*, or the activities of being a *fénnid*, is the subject of Joseph F. Nagy, *Wisdom of the Outlaw* (Berkeley, 1985), see esp. chaps. 1 and 2, pp. 17-40 and 41-79. For more on the *fían*, or war-band, see also Nagy's "The Sign of the Outlaw: Multiformity in Fenian Narrative," in *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry*, ed. John Foley (Columbus, 1978), 465-492; Richard Sharpe, "Hiberno-Latin *laicus*, Irish *láech*, and the Devil's Men," *Ériu* 30 (1979): 75-92.
35. Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw*, 18.
36. One sees this use of liminality to highlight the saint's spiritual excellence in the birth of certain saints as well: see Kim McCone, "Early Irish Saints' Lives," in *The Maynooth Review* 11 (1984): 26-59; for his discussion of liminal births, including that of Áed, see p. 37.
37. For Christian works in Ireland, see Clancy and Márkus, *Iona*, 211-222. Clancy and Márkus discuss what sources the library at the monastery of Iona seems to have possessed, based on a reading of sources known to be from that monastery. See also John Carey, *King of Mysteries: Early Irish Religious Writings* (Dublin, 2000), 9-25; Johan Corthals, "Early Irish *Retoirics* and Their Late Antique Background," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 31 (1996): 17-36; L. Gougaud, "The Remains of Ancient Irish Monastic Libraries," in *Féil-Sgríbhann Eoin Mhic Néill: Essays and Studies Presented to Professor Eoin Mac Neill*, ed. John Ryan (Dublin, 1995), 319-334; Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry,* on the influence of Martin, 130, 149-150, 173-174, 286; Gregory the Great, 130, 137-139, 141, 152; Antony, 130, 137, 142; Germanus, 137, 140. D. R. Howlett, *The Celtic Latin Tradition of Biblical Style* (Dublin, 1995); D. R. Howlett, "The Earliest Irish Writers at Home and Abroad," *Peritia* 8 (1994): 1-17; Michael Lapidge, "A New Hiberno-Latin hymn on St. Martin," *Celtica* 21 (1990): 240-251; Proinsias Mac Cana, "On the Early Development of Written Narrative Prose in Irish and Welsh," *Études Celtiques* 29 (1992): 51-67; Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature*, Maynooth Monographs 3 (Maynooth, 1991), especially chaps. 2, 3, 4, 6; Thomas O'Loughlin, "The Library of Iona in the Late Seventh Century," *Ériu* 45 (1994): 33-52; idem, "The Latin Version of the Scriptures in Iona in the Late Seventh Century: The Evidence from Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*," *Peritia* 8 (1994): 18-26; see also Jane Stevenson, "Literacy in Ireland: The Evidence of the Patrick Dossier in the Book of Armagh," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamund McKitterick (Cambridge, 1990), 11-35.
38. For a valuable introduction see Dáithi Ó hÓgáin, *Myth, Legend, and Romance: An Encyclopaedia of the Irish Folk Tradition* (New York, 1991), 185, "Fairies." For one of the best sources on the topic, see Jonathon M. Wooding, ed., *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature: An Anthology of Criticism* (Dublin,

2000). In particular and most germane to this study, see in Wooding John Carey, "The Location of the Otherworld in Irish Tradition," 113-119; Thomas Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*," 94-108 (originally published in *Celtica* 11 [1976]: 43-59); Thomas Owen Clancy, "Subversion at Sea: Sstructure, Style, and Intent in the Immrama," 194-225; Proinsias Mac Cana, "The Sinless Otherworld of *Immram Brain*," 52-72; see also Myles Dillon, *Early Irish Literature*, 101; Joseph F. Nagy, "Liminality and Knowledge in Irish Tradition," *Studia Celtica* 16-17 (1981-1982): 135-143.

39. For the Otherworld connection with poetry, see Myles Dillon, "The Archaism of Irish Tradition," in *PBA* 34 (1948): 245-264; Dáithi Ó hÓgáin, *An File: Staidéar ar Osnádúrthacht na Filíochta sa Traidisiún Gaelach* (Dublin: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1982); Dáithi Ó hÓgáin**,** "The Visionary Voice: A Survey of Popular Attitudes to Poetry in Irish Tradition," in *Irish University Review* 9 (1979): 44-61, especially 57; for a good look at later developments, see James Carney, *Medieval Irish Lyrics Selected and Translated with the Irish Bardic Poet: A Study in the Relationship of Poet and Patron* (Mountrath, 1985), 105-140; J. E. Caerwyn Williams, *The Court Poet in Medieval Ireland* (London, 1971).
40. See in particular David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, 2006), 6: 226-239; 241-246. See also David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, 1998); Marvin W. Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (Princeton, 1999).
41. See especially James Goehring, "The Dark Side of the Landscape," 444.
42. For a discussion of the manuscript tradition, see Paul Grosjean, "De sancto Aido Episcopo Killariensi in Hibernia," *Acta Sanctorum* 4 (1925): 495-531; see also W. W. Heist, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Subsidia Hagiographica 28 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1965), xi-xxviii; for a discussion of the *Codex Kilkenniensus*, see also Charles Plummer, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, ix-xxiii, xxvi-xxviii. The most recent work is Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: An Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford, 1991), 390. Sharpe has posited that the *S* text is closest to the original (c. 750-800), and, although his arguments from orthography have recently been challenged, his thesis still holds up well based on my reading of the Life's content and style; for Sharpe's dating, see pp. 300, 328-329; Emmons, "The Limits of Late Antiquity: The Life of St. Áed mac Bricc and the Irish Literati in Late Antiquity," 3-10; 138-139. See Caoimhín Breatnach, "The Significance of the Orthography of Irish Proper Names in the Codex Salmanticensis," in *Ériu* 55 (2005): 85-101, for a different take on Sharpe's view of orthography in *S*.
43. Kenney, *Sources for the Early History of Ireland,* 393. See also *The Annals of Ulster (to A. D. 1131)*, ed. Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill, Part 1: Text and Translation (Dublin, 1983), 94-95.
44. Columbanus (d. 615), one of the better known Irish missionaries to the Continent, was the founder of Luxeuil in France and Bobbio in Italy.
45. For Áed's genealogy see Pádraig Ó Riain, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1985), 4, 65, 69, 87; see also Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000), 555 , 609.
46. Kenney, *Sources for the Early History of Ireland,* 393. Áed joins the church after

he and some companions abduct a young woman in order to force Áed's brothers to give him his inheritance, *VA* § 3.

47. Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum Locorum et Tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae: An Index, with Identifications, to the Gaelic Names of Places and Tribes* (Dublin, 1910), 397 , 566.
48. *VA*, § 34. See also VA § 35 where Áed reveals demons to another man.
49. *VA* § 35.
50. *VA*, § 14.
51. *VA* § 19 (Fith Ihle).
52. *VA* § 26.
53. This "island" was most likely a crannog, an artificial island that served as a defensible settlement.
54. Ibid.
55. *VA* § 27.
56. The identity of this person is unclear, but a likely candidate might be Bec mac Dé, the druid who foretold that Díarmait mac Cerbaill would die in the house of Banbán. See *Aidhed Dhiarmada*, "The Death-tale of Díarmait," in O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*. Here he is referred to as a *propheta*, but it is unclear whether he is a druid. The connection with Díarmait mac Cerbaill, who appears in the *Vita* and who was also a member of the southern Uí Néill (albeit a more successful branch), suggests that this Bec may very well be Bec mac Dé. Plummer, *Vita Sanctorum Hiberniae,* §19 of Aed's Life, has simply *quidem propheta nomine Becc.* In his introduction, however, he makes Áed contemporary with Bec mac Dé: see Plummer, *Vita Sanctorum Hiberniae*, xxviii. See also Joan Newlon Radner, "The Significance of the Threefold Death in Celtic Tadition," *Celtic Folklore and Christianity*, 180-199. It is perhaps significant that Bec is referred to as *propheta* rather than *sanctus*.
57. See Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*, 192ff. See too Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*.
58. See, for example, Basil of Caesarea, "To Youths," in *The Letters*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, Loeb Classical Series, ed. T. E. Page et al., vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1961), 378-435; Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke, The Fathers of the Church, ed. Roy Joseph Deferrari et al., vol. 21 (Washington D.C., 1966), 176-181; see for the opposing view St. Jerome, *Select Letters of St. Jerome*, trans. F. A. Wright, The Loeb Classical Library, ed. T. E. Page et al. (Cambridge, 1954), 124ff.
59. Nagy, *Angels and Ancients*, 73-74.
60. Ibid., 74.
61. Ibid., 74.
62. See also *Early Irish Literature*, xvii. See also E. J. Gwynn, ed. and trans., *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, 5 vols. (Dublin, 1991); generally, *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (see also the ongoing update of place-name lore on line at "The LOCUS Project,"<http://www.ucc.ie/locus/>); Brian Ó Cuív, "Aspects of Irish Personal Names," *Celtica* 18 (1986): 151-184; Ó Cuív, "Dinnshenchas: The Literary Exploitation of Irish Place-Names," *Ainm* 4 (1989-90): 90-106.
63. Thomas O'Loughlin, "The Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 24 (1992): 37-53.

64. Ibid., 38-39. See also Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R.P.H. Green, Oxford World Classics (Oxford, 1997), 3, 43-44; Joseph Martin, ed., *De Doctrina Christiana*, CCSL 32 (Turnholt, 1962).
65. O'Loughlin, "The Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*," 39. Siloam is the pool in Jerusalem where Jesus healed a blind man; see John 9: 1-7.
66. O'Loughlin, "The Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*," 40**;** Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 56-59.
67. O'Loughlin, "The Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*," 40.
68. *Jura Fathers*, 208.

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PART III

CIVIC ELITES IN THE BYZANTINE EAST

7

THE WORLD OF ST. DANIEL THE STYLITE: RHETORIC, *RELIGIO*, AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE *LIFE* OF THE PILLAR SAINT

Miriam Raub Vivian

A pagan temple inhabited by demons is causing nearby ships to sink and injuring passersby. Hearing of this, an ascetic, whose inspiration is a monk who has taken to dwelling atop a pillar, uses the power of prayer to subdue and expel these evil forces, even as they hurl stones at him. Throngs of grateful people stream to see the one who has created calm and safety where there had been fear and injury.

This intriguing episode about the fifth century's St. Daniel the Stylite (409-493) is just one example of the power of the *Life* of this pillar saint to provide its readers a window through which to observe many features of Late Antiquity. The rich potential of Daniel's *Vita* to illuminate life in the late Roman Empire, especially its eastern half, was made particularly evident in the groundbreaking 1971 article by Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," which devoted considerable analysis to the *Life of St. Daniel*.[1] Although Daniel was not an official of the church, as an ascetic he nevertheless played a crucial role in late Roman society and political life, mingling with civic elites in the Byzantine East, such as bishops, who from the conversion of Constantine nearly a century earlier had become an integral part of the established order, as demonstrated by H. A. Drake in *Constantine and the Bishops*.[2]

Professor Drake has long recognized the power of the *Life of St. Daniel the Stylite* to engage a broad range of students and educate them about some of the most important facets of Late Antiquity. His inclusion of this

work as a significant reading in his Western Civilization course for well over three decades introduced thousands of undergraduates, myself among them, to this rich and fascinating text with its many insights into the Roman world.[3] Whereas some readers of Daniel's *Life* may be tempted to dismiss it as historically unreliable hagiography, to do so is to lose out on a rich source for antiquity. As with any document, no one should assume that it reflects absolute historical truth. Yet historians have fruitfully explored and exploited even clearly fictional accounts, such as Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, to shed light on both the world depicted by these works and the societies that created them.[4] *The Life of St. Daniel the Stylite* is no different: as hagiography it clearly praises its holy hero, but it also offers a wealth of information about eastern Roman society in Late Antiquity.

The *Life* is full of fascinating incidents, but it is so much more than the recitation of one holy man's exploits: the *Life* transmits a Christian view of the late Roman empire and thus stands as an invaluable rhetorical work. In composing the *Life*, Daniel's biographer was framing his world through a Christian—and orthodox—lens. He sought to convey to his audience, through the major events of Daniel's life, a vision of Rome's true *religio*: a Christian empire in which leaders are evaluated by their piety and orthodoxy and how well they treat its faith; where the hand of Providence guides those open to its wisdom and power; and at whose center its saints, inspired by God, provide wisdom, healing, and even defense against evil, whether demonic or heretical.

As a fifth-century holy man and "urban saint" stationed on the edge of the eastern Roman capital at Constantinople, accessible to people of every status, Daniel indeed occupied the physical and metaphorical center of Roman society in the East.[5] Perhaps ironically, monks such as Daniel who traveled—sometimes extensively—nevertheless became fixtures of a sort: icons whom others approached for aid.[6] Like the exploits of the fictitious Lucius in Apuleius' famous work, Daniel's *Life*—with its narration of his work, travels, and interactions with others—illuminates social relationships in the late Roman empire. [7] Whereas Daniel's encounters with religious authorities are fascinating for the tensions regarding authority that sometimes accompanied them—and his relations with political figures are striking for the deference these leaders paid him—it is Daniel's relationship with less exalted people that routinely punctuates the *Life* and underscores the central social role of the ascetic in Late Antiquity. Through his dedication to God and renunciation of the things of this world, the ascetic was the one person society recognized as objective.[8] Trusted and often accessible, ascetics were routinely sought out in Roman society, as seen in various incidents in Daniel's *Life*, where the holy man

functions in so many different capacities, including as a protector, recipient of others' charity, diplomat, compassionate healer, social safety valve, listener *par excellence*, and spiritual leader.

Daniel's anonymous biographer was clearly a devoted disciple of the holy man, and he brings to his account personal knowledge and his own observations of Daniel. Where appropriate in his narrative, he is also careful to insert "they say," a reference to those who had been disciples before he himself took up the ascetic life. In the very first chapter of the *Vita*, the author lays out his purpose and approach: "I will truthfully recite all the things that I heard from those who were the saint's disciples before me and I will also truthfully relate the things I saw with my own eyes."[9] Later in the *Life* he indicates that others could have contradicted his version of the monk's life, had they thought it inaccurate: "Some of the God-loving men who most often frequented the Saint's sheepfold are still living and they still bear in their memories that which I am about to relate."[10] Writing "for the edification and benefit of many," Daniel's biographer produced a work that, like other hagiographies, inspired many.[11] If we consider the power of such works to excite readers about monasticism—and certainly this was one goal of this rhetorical piece—we do well also to ponder how much more so these holy monks in the flesh must have captured the imaginations of their contemporaries.

For the disciple who penned this work, the saints are clearly central. He notes in the very first lines of the biography that the "patient endurance of the martyrs" has been given to humans by Christ himself as "an example that we may know that it is possible for a person, through the patient endurance of his afflictions, to please God and to be called his faithful servant."[12] In a post-Constantinian world, where persecution by Roman authorities of Christians as followers of a *religio illicita* no longer occurs, the martyr has morphed into the monk, whose mortification of the body continues the tradition of suffering for the sake of Christ and as *imitatio Christi*.[13] As becomes increasingly clear in the *Life*, Daniel's biographer sees the holy man at the center of the web of relationships that make up his society: whether ordinary lay persons or clergy (from local priests to the archbishop) or temporal leaders (from local magistrates to the emperor himself), all seek out the holy man to help them navigate their world.

It is essential to point out, however, that none of these relationships would have been possible had Daniel not ventured from the monastery into the wider world and made himself accessible to those outside his circle of disciples. Through "monastic mobility," monks such as Daniel traveled freely, increasing access to themselves and helping to transform Roman society in ways both large and small.[14] Indeed, by the age of twelve, according to his biographer, Daniel has left his home and traveled

some ten miles to a monastery outside his village.[15] Received by the brethren after convincing them that despite his youth he is committed to the difficult life of a monk, Daniel later departs the monastery with the abbot and other monks—on their way to a meeting of "all the archimandrites of the East"[16]—to visit St. Simeon, the ascetic who inspires him to later take up life as a stylite, or pillar saint.[17] "A little time later," Daniel leaves monastery life for good: having been chosen as abbot, he is free to do as he chooses.[18] Now free of coenobitic responsibilities, Daniel returns to St. Simeon's pillar for two weeks, refusing to stay longer—despite Simeon's pleas—in order to pursue his ultimate goal: a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the spiritual capital of Rome's Christian empire, followed by retreat to the inner desert, presumably inspired by the long tradition attributed to Antony of Egypt.[19] Yet Daniel's plan is derailed by an old monk on the road who confirms the warnings Daniel has heard from others of troubles in the Holy Land.[20] The holy man is convinced by the old man's advice: "Go to Byzantium and you will see a second Jerusalem, Constantinople."[21] There is no evidence that Daniel was daunted by traveling such a vast distance—over 500 miles as the crow flies—much farther than he had traveled before.

Daniel does not make it to Byzantium straight away, yet his nine-year stay in Anaplus provides significant access to the holy man for the people of that community.[22] To calm the fears of local inhabitants upset by demons operating out of an abandoned pagan temple, Daniel delays reaching what became his final destination outside the eastern capital.[23] In two of the seven chapters devoted to Daniel's nine-year stay in this temple, the author makes a point of noting how the saint takes care to create a means of communication with those who seek him: although Daniel blocked the door of the temple, he "left a small window through which he would talk with those who came up to see him."[24] In so doing, Daniel establishes a pattern for his monastic vocation characterized by interaction with the outside world and, as with his pillar dwelling later on, the holy man retains control over that access.[25]

In fighting the demons in the pagan temple, Daniel provides one of his most important social functions: protector of the community. It is no surprise that Daniel's victory over the demons in this temple impresses those who had feared its demonic power. Daniel's biographer describes what he learned from others about the saint's spiritual struggle against stone-throwing demons who created "the sound of a multitude knocking and making an uproar," later flying "around his face like scores of bats."[26] Daniel has neutralized the power of evil in their midst, and so "where demons had just recently been dancing was now a place where, on account of the patient endurance of the righteous man, night and day Christ was

glorified."[27] By subduing the demons, Daniel secures the trust and gratitude of the local population—and well beyond, as his fame soon spreads: "It was possible to see streams of men and women, along with their children, coming to see the saint."[28] His spiritual feat of victory against Satan's minions relieves the fear of the local inhabitants, earning him devotion as their protector.[29] In a society beset by demonic forces that could be overcome only through spiritual warfare, the holy man functions as a Christian soldier, providing what others could not:[30] ascetic weapons that repel and disarm demons—in antiquity a service critical to what we today might term "national security."[31] Daniel's victory over the temple demons cements his relationship with the populace, and his many contacts with lay people, particularly the powerless, are featured throughout the *Life*, illustrating his central social function.[32] It is the holy man's role as community advocate and benefactor which is typically emphasized by scholars, but in these contacts something else of equal importance is revealed: in many instances it is Daniel who relies on others.

Leaving the monastery, Daniel opens himself to a wider social world, not only offering help but also receiving it. As a recipient of assistance from others, the saint performs an important function by allowing members of the community to practice the Christian virtue of charity. Daniel sometimes needs help from others at least in part because whereas we might say he is spiritually fluent, Daniel is apparently not bilingual and has to work within the confines of his native Syriac.[33] Although that limits somewhat Daniel's direct discourse with others, there is no evidence that it hampers his work in any significant way. We see, for example, that when he overhears (in Syriac) the problem of demons in the temple, he "asked a person who understood Syriac" about it.[34] After Daniel has lived several years in this temple, local inhabitants, some of whom must also speak Syriac, even help him discern his fuller vocation. Referred to by Daniel's biographer as his "neighbors,"[35] and thereby suggesting the image of Daniel as part of a neighborhood community, some of the people living nearby offer him their interpretation of an ecstatic vision that he relates to them. The biographer notes that Daniel is shaken by the experience of this vision of himself with St. Simeon atop a pillar of clouds, and so he turns to his neighbors to share his story; then he apparently accepts their understanding of it, for they tell him, "You must climb a pillar and take on St. Simeon's way of life and be supported by the angels."[36] Before long, this is exactly what he does.

It is another monk, Sergius, a disciple of the late Simeon, to whom the holy man turns for help when he determines it is finally time for him to leave his temple dwelling and take up the life of a stylite.[37] Sergius had first sought to present Simeon's tunic to the emperor Leo "as a means of

benediction."[38] When, however, the emperor is too busy, Sergius decides to leave, boarding a boat that stops (to be towed through a shallow channel) near the temple where Daniel is dwelling. Hearing about the holy man in the temple, Sergius goes with others to see him and decides not only to stay with the holy man but also to pass the mantle of St. Simeon to Daniel. He takes out the leather tunic and cowl of Simeon and hands them to Daniel through the window of the temple.[39] When Sergius shares his vision about Daniel with the holy man, a vision in which three young men approach Daniel and tell him it is time to leave the temple to "enter the arena,"[40] Daniel concludes that God has led Sergius to him to help him begin his work as a stylite. Led once again by Providence—in this case the inspiration is the flight of a white dove—Sergius identifies the somewhat isolated place where Daniel's column should be set up. Yet another person, the palace guard Mark, who has been "a friend of the holy man," requests that he be able to provide the column.[41] And so with the aid of others, Daniel is able to ascend his column—at the age of fifty-one—and move to a new level in his monastic vocation.

Not all who encounter Daniel, however, offer their assistance. When conflicts arise, the holy man often functions as something of a diplomat, and a case in point arises with the location of Daniel's column. It turns out that the divinely inspired place for this column, described as "not high," "about the height of two men,"[42] is on land belonging to the steward of the imperial table, a man named Gelanius. An episode with this man illustrates Daniel's growing prominence but also the potential for conflict once the holy man has moved beyond what had been his monastic enclosure. Gelanius' workers, though initially "astonished, for the sight was a strange one," recognize Daniel as the one who had pacified the demon-controlled temple and they accept his prayers.[43] Yet when they relate their story to their boss, who was in the capital at the time, Gelanius is furious, both because his own men failed to guard his land properly and because the holy man has set up shop on his property "without his knowledge."[44]

This situation leads to a potential showdown between the holy man and the landowner. Gelanius is prepared to force the issue, and initially approaches the holy man asking, "Who gave you permission to erect a column on land belonging to me? . . . Since you have shown contempt for me, the master of this land, and have deceived the emperor and the archbishop, know that I have been empowered by them to bring you down from there."[45] The men whom Gelanius has brought with him are amazed at a sudden change in weather just as Gelanius approaches the holy man: "Clouds gathered and a storm appeared, accompanied by hail, so that all the fruit of the vineyards was destroyed and the leaves were

torn to shreds."[46] These men grow increasingly uncomfortable as the landowner persists with his demands. They perceive it as "unjust and illegal" and say that "this person is orthodox and this place lies far from your fields."[47]

This criticism of Gelanius by those gathered puts the landowner in a delicate spot. He can stand his ground and insist the holy man descend the column and leave his land, thus losing favor among his workers (the potential effects of whose disgruntlement are unclear) and appearing to thwart the work of one so holy and orthodox, or he can acquiesce to the voice of the crowd and lose face. As no doubt neither option holds great appeal for the landowner, he comes up with an interesting solution, but one that depends on the holy man's diplomatic sense and his willingness to show utter deference to the landowner. As narrated by Daniel's biographer, we see this is precisely what the holy man does:

> When Gelanius saw that a disturbance was about to happen, he spoke to the blessed one in Syriac (by birth he was a Syro-Persian from Mesopotamia): "Please give the appearance that you are coming down for the sake of those who gave the order and I will not allow you to touch the ground." Therefore a ladder was brought, and blessed Daniel climbed about six steps down the column. With yet more steps to climb down until he reached the bottom, Gelanius ran up to him and stopped him from coming all the way down, saying, "Return to your dwelling and your place and pray for me."[48]

Returned to the top of his column, Daniel prays for Gelanius and those assembled, and "everyone went down from the hill in peace." For Gelanius the frustration of an ascetic trespasser, thanks to the diplomacy of the holy man, has become an asset to his property. Indeed, so taken is he with Daniel that soon Gelanius wants to give him a new, higher column.[49]

Between Gelanius' proposal to elevate the holy man to an even larger column and the actual transfer of Daniel to his new dwelling, an incident occurs that is at the heart of Daniel's *Life*: the saint as healer. As monks sought to imitate Christ and to serve Him through serving others,[50] they often took as a chief vocation providing aid to the sick.[51] In this typical example from Daniel's *Life*, a lawyer from Thrace named Sergius traveled for eight days in search of Daniel, bringing with him for healing "his very young son, his only child, named John, who was being tormented by an evil demon."[52] The link between illness and demons is noteworthy. For what Romans of Late Antiquity could not name, they found an answer for in the vast menu of illnesses they attributed to demons. Because maladies

were so often diagnosed as spiritual, it is once again the holy man to whom many turn for aid. There are numerous examples in Daniel's *Vita* of individuals seeking healing, and although their symptoms vary, their desperation is similar and their goal the same: to have the holy man provide a cure. At one point Daniel prays for the archbishop Anatolius, that "he might be delivered from the illness,"[53] and a "former consul and prefect," Cyrus, brings two of his daughters on separate occasions for healing.[54] Yet not all of the saint's clients are high officials. There is the lawyer, Sergius, mentioned above, and a priest from Pontus, among many others.[55] Indeed, there is ample evidence in the *Life* that acts of healing dominate the time the holy man spends with others. In wanting to build a "house" for the disciples of Daniel and for "foreigners,"[56] Emperor Leo acknowledges to Daniel that many people seek him out "with so many needs": "You…endure being disturbed in any number of ways from those who afflict you with various matters."[57] During his only descent from his pillar, Daniel heals a leper while he is in the capital, only to have word spread so that "everyone in the city, taking those who were ill, was running to the servant of God, and the Lord granted healing to all in abundance."[58]

That the holy man spends a good bit of time healing people is clear; it is also clear that the community expects him to. When Emperor Leo begs Daniel to allow him to have an enclosure made for him after a terrible storm has assaulted the holy man, stripping him of his tunic and leaving him nearly frozen, Daniel initially refuses. Yet the emperor persists, finally (although barely) convincing him with the following words: "Please do us the favor of rendering us assistance for many more years. Therefore, do not kill yourself outright, for God has given you as fruit to us."[59] In the capital Daniel stops at the Monastery of Studius and seeks to rest a bit from the crowd, and when the monks determine they might take him

> through the garden alongside the sea and spirit him safely away [from the crowd] by boat to the very great and holy church . . . a great tumult arose among them as they cried out, "Bring the righteous one here, if you love orthodoxy! Do not begrudge the sick healing!" They were also saying to the righteous one, "'You received without payment; give without payment in return!' [Matt. 10.8]. If you desert us we will burn down the martyrion right now!"[60]

The agitated crowd is calmed by the words of the holy man, who reassures them and urges them to "go on ahead of him and thus relieve the pressure of the crowd."[61] This incident with the crowd is not the only example of Daniel's dissipation of a potentially explosive situation. Allowing the

crowd to express itself but directing the participants' anger and frustration away from violence and destruction, Daniel acts as a safety valve.

Much more dramatic than the demands of such a crowd is a slightly earlier episode in which a throng in the capital begins to riot outside the palace to protest the emperor's attachment to Monophysitism.[62] Factions at the court of Constantinople had become more pronounced after the death of the "blessed Leo" in early 474. When Basiliscus seized control of the throne in early 475 from the emperor Zeno (Leo's son-in-law), Zeno was forced to flee with his wife, Empress Ariadne.[63] The archbishop Acacius responded by asking Daniel to come to the capital to help defend the faith. The magnitude of the threat is underscored by Daniel's willingness to descend from his pillar for the only time in over thirty-three years.[64] Congregating at the church where the holy man has made his way, the crowd moves along with Daniel to the palace and they "shouted out over and over for the Saint to enter the palace." The crowd may have been getting impatient and agitated with the guards' refusal to admit the holy man, so in speaking to them Daniel reinforces a message of peace and channels their efforts into a nonviolent protest:

> Why do you weary yourselves, children? You shall have from God the reward that is given to the peacemaker. Therefore, since it seems right to this imposter [Basiliscus] to send us away empty handed, let us do to him according to the word of the Lord, for he said to his holy disciples and apostles, "Whatever town or village you enter and they do not welcome you, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them" [Matt. 10.11-14; Luke 9.4-5]. Therefore let us do the same. First he shook out his leather tunic and had the whole crowd do the same, and a noise like thunder came from the shaking of clothing. When the Scholarian Guards heard about the wonderful things that God had done through his servant [Daniel], most of them left everything and followed him.[65]

This episode ends in the very dramatic reconciliation of Emperor Basiliscus and Archbishop Acacius, as the two officials lay prostrate at the feet of the holy man "before all the people" in the Great Church. We are told that Daniel "leaned over and instructed them in the ways of peace and to refrain from hatred for each other from that time on." What Daniel says to them next captures a deep concern for both temporal and spiritual leaders in the Roman world: "For . . . if your relationship is unstable, you are wreaking havoc both in the holy churches and throughout the world."[66] The *Life* highlights the holy man's authority and wisdom as central to efforts to maintain peace in Roman society.

This ascetic wisdom seems to rest in part on listening, and it is possible to characterize the holy man of Late Antiquity as a listener par excellence. Perhaps more than any service Daniel provides to his community, he listens—to descriptions of illness, stories of pain and suffering, tales of torment and loss. The description of the suffering surrounding the devastating fire in Constantinople in 469 nicely illustrates Daniel's role as listener. With most of the city "put to flight," the inhabitants of the capital stream to see the holy man, asking him to "propitiate God and make the fire stop" and telling him all their misfortunes.[67] Even though the *Life* contends that Daniel had earlier prophesied that some kind of divine wrath would descend on the capital, only to have the emperor fail to make any preparations, Daniel nevertheless shows profound compassion for the victims of the fire. As the stories of loss fall upon his ears—this one has lost many possessions, another one his wife and children, yet another shipwrecked and devoid of all possessions in the attempt to escape the fire—"the Saint wept."[68] Daniel not only hears their stories but he is moved to sorrow by them. Throughout the *Life*, he reacts in the same fashion to most of the sick brought to him for healing.

Those in need sought ascetics such as Daniel because they were seen as approachable intermediaries between God and mortals, Christians whose lives of sacrificial devotion to Christ had won them a certain "intimacy with God."[69] As Peter Brown points out, Christians in Late Antiquity were convinced that God could be moved to beneficent action: "If Byzantines had not believed that it was possible for created beings to sway the will of God by their intercessions, then the rise of the holy man and the rise of the icon would not have happened."[70]

How did ascetics such as Daniel maintain their spiritual lives when confronted with so much human pain and distress, when hearing so many stories of misery? The answer may lie in *hesychasm*, a practice that reached its height in Syrian asceticism. The stillness and silence of this practice allowed holy men such as Daniel to remain true ascetics even though their dwellings became great objects of veneration, attracting pilgrims and inspiring disciples. It also allowed them time to listen. As one scholar has put it, these practitioners of *hesychasm* were able to listen "to all the voices and cries of mankind which no one else has time to hear."[71]

It may also have been the background of many ascetics that likewise enabled them to listen to the burdens of others with compassion. Most holy men came from the ranks of peasants[72]—certainly Daniel came from a modest, rural background—and this made them both highly approachable and able to relate to the many who sought their aid. No doubt having endured their own hardships in life, these ascetics could easily identify with the burdens and travails of ordinary people. These holy

men thus provided an example that appealed to inhabitants of every rank, a model that Rome's vast religious smorgasbord had never really offered before: human beings who embodied the virtues of faith. Christian ascetics sought perfect holiness. Icons clothed in flesh, these practitioners of asceticism stood as windows onto the perfect Christian life, as Brown so ably describes: with the rise of the holy man, people no longer saw religion in terms of "things," such as huge stone temples and impersonal oracle sites, but in more human dimensions.[73]

These living, breathing models of what so many of the age considered the highest Christian calling inspired many others to join the ranks of ascetics. As a spiritual leader and teacher, Daniel attracted many disciples. From the monk who early on became a disciple of the holy man, setting up "a hut for himself" and living "near the saint, opposite the column," to the emperor's request to the holy man "to build a dwelling for the brothers and foreigners" who had grown up around the saint's column, we gain a clear picture of a sizeable community of disciples living in the vicinity of Daniel's column, committed to imitating to the degree possible the stylite's life.[74]

There were other individuals, including some who had been healed by Daniel, who in thanksgiving and devotion either stayed on with him or set up their own monastic cells. Take for example the young boy, the son of the lawyer Sergius, who after one week was healed of his affliction. In gratitude for his restored health he begs his father "to receive the holy habit." When his father resists, the child "swore an oath: 'If you do not do this, I will secretly leave for other lands where you will not even be able to see me!'" At this the boy's father acceded and petitioned the holy man for a habit for the boy, which he apparently was given after a year of living faithfully with the other brothers.[75] The *Life* also describes a "barbarian" by the (not-very-barbarian) name of Anatolius—a name given him by the saint—who after witnessing the devotion of the saint "aspired to the same kind of life in the same place." News of Anatolius' "blameless way of life . . . spread everywhere," enough so that the man apparently tired of people coming to see him and of "human glory." So he received permission from Daniel to set up a cell in a church, ultimately spawning his own disciples: "Shutting himself in a small cell, he lived that way for a long time and founded a small monastery of about twelve men."[76]

Whereas Daniel's ascetic feats capture the imagination of many, he is also a teacher and spiritual leader. When Emperor Leo persists in his efforts to build housing for Daniel's disciples, the holy man finally acquiesces—largely in exchange for the emperor's agreeing to bring the remains of St. Simeon from Antioch to Daniel's column. On the day when Simeon's remains are deposited at Daniel's site, the holy man provides

instruction to his disciples and others gathered, including the archbishop. It appears that his words, though simple, deeply affected those who heard them:

> He taught them neither elegantly nor philosophically but about the love of God and love for the poor and almsgiving and love for others and the life eternal in store for the saints and the eternal judgment awaiting sinners. By the grace of God these most faithful people were so deeply moved that they watered the ground with their tears.[77]

It is as much Daniel's words (his "catechetical instructions") as his lifestyle that attract one of the most interesting men among those who encounter Daniel's column and his ascetic community. This episode reveals not only the powerful influence Daniel could exert over others but also the rigors associated with the ascetic life. According to Daniel's *Vita*, Emperor Leo, on hearing about a man of renown from Gaul, a man "readied and equipped for war," sends for this solider named Titus and honors him "with the rank of count in order to have him fight on his behalf" in the event of war. He sends the count to visit Daniel to get a blessing from the holy man. The only problem is that once Titus observes the monastic community, he decides he would rather become an ascetic like Daniel than serve the emperor, and Daniel accepts his entreaty to join him.[78] Not surprisingly, the emperor Leo is angry, though he finally accepts the loss of Titus, comforted in large part by Daniel, who assures him that another, braver one will take Titus' place.[79]

Yet Titus' zealousness for asceticism and his desire to model himself closely on the beloved Daniel leads him to an early death. He secretly observes the saint, hoping to find out when and how much Daniel eats, but he cannot discover him eating at all. Instead of recognizing that Daniel has been practicing asceticism for years, Titus throws himself into the discipline as if a seasoned veteran rather than the novice he is. He hangs suspended above ground by ropes drawn under his armpits. He rests his head upon a plank propped up against his chest. He eats a mere three dates a day, or three dried figs. Although Daniel's biographer regards Titus as an ascetic hero of sorts, a man with "an inspired way of life" who "benefited everyone who came to see him," including the emperor, his experience demonstrates more likely how not to approach the ascetic life and reminds readers that a true holy man like Daniel is a rare treasure, a man renowned for his patient endurance rather than any flashy ascetic stunts, a man whose endurance and longevity made him a valuable figure in the social world of the east Roman empire in this period. [80]

A rhetorical work intended to highlight the virtues of St. Daniel and provide a vision of orthodox Christianity as the only true *religio* of the empire, the *Life of Daniel* illuminates so much more. In particular, it reveals the enduring role of the holy man of Late antiquity, a figure—an icon of sorts—at the center of Roman life, whose relationships with members of all levels of society require him to function in numerous capacities: as protector, giver and receiver of aid, diplomat, healer, safety valve, listener, and spiritual leader. Whereas Daniel's encounters with prominent leaders, such as the archbishop and the emperor, are of obvious interest and reveal fascinating issues such as claims to authority in a Christian empire, it is his relationships with people of more modest background that highlight the central function of holy men such as Daniel and demonstrate the value of literature such as *The Life of St. Daniel the Stylite* in deepening our understanding of Roman society in Late Antiquity.

NOTES

1. *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80-101. That seminal article was revisited in an issue of the *Journal of Early Christian Studies* devoted solely to Brown's holy man: vol. 6, no. 3 (fall 1998). Norman H. Baynes and Elizabeth Dawes made an important contribution sixty years ago by producing an English translation of the Greek *Life*. Baynes's introduction to the *Life*, however, is brief, running only six pages. Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints* (Crestwood, NY, 1977 [1948]).
2. *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore, 2000).
3. On a personal note, I worked on Daniel in a senior honors seminar under Drake's direction and, having never lost my fascination for Daniel, returned to his life as a focus of research after graduate school.
4. This chapter was inspired in part by Fergus Millar's "The World of the *Golden Ass*," *Journal of Roman Studies* 71 (1981): 63-75, in which Millar analyzes the second-century novel for evidence of life in the Roman world, especially social and economic relationships.
5. For an exploration of monks who dwelt in or near urban centers and were routinely engaged with the local community, see Julia Seiber, "The Urban Saint in Early Byzantine Social History," *British Archaeological Reports* 37 (1977): 117.
6. In his death Daniel is described by his biographer: "By order of the archbishop, the plank, on which the body had been secured so it would not fall, was stood upright and, like an icon, the Saint was displayed to everyone on every side," *Vita Sancti Danielis* (cited hereafter as *VD*), chap. 99. All translations are by Tim Vivian and based on the Greek text edited by Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Saints stylites* (Brussels, 1962 [1923]), 1-94.

7. Daniel's biographer refers to the *vita* as "a narrative of the labors" of the saint: *VD,* chap 1.
8. Severing himself from traditional society through unnatural ascetic practices, the holy man earned a great reputation for objectivity, with a position that enabled him to stand outside of family and economic ties.
9. *VD*, chap. 1
10. *VD*, chap. 12. In an essay on St. Daniel, Robin Lane Fox rightly contends that whereas the saint's biographer had extensive knowledge about the holy man, he likely chose to omit reference to some events and to depict others only very carefully. See "The Life of Daniel," in M. J. Edwards and S. Swain, eds., *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1997), 175-225.
11. His words are in *VD*, chap. 1.
12. *VD*, chap. 1.
13. For a compelling treatment of the monk as successor to the martyr, see Edward E. Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr: The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr* (Washington, D.C., 1950).
14. Unlike much of the population of Late Antiquity, monks—most notably anchorites—were not bound to one location. What I term "monastic mobility" gave monks broad influence over their contemporaries in a number of ways: it helped elevate the importance of Christian holy sites, especially Jerusalem (which Daniel had hoped to visit), as well as the sites monks themselves created by their dwellings; this mobility sometimes neutralized the power of classical religious structures (such as the temple from which Daniel expelled the demons, chaps. 14-15), and it granted monks an opportunity to elevate their own social status. They were thus a critical element in the transformation of Roman society from classical to Christian. See Miriam Raub Vivian, "Monastic Mobility and Roman Transformation: The Example of St. Daniel the Stylite," *Studia Patristica* 39 (2006): 461-466. There are two fairly recent monographs examining the role of wandering monks: Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2002); and Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (University Park, 2005).
15. *VD*, chap. 4.
16. *VD*, chap. 6.
17. Though an inspiration to Daniel, Simeon's lifestyle was not universally affirmed. Some Mesopotamian monks believed Simeon's behavior was "really just a form of vanity: 'For . . . even if someone living with you were able to demonstrate a previously unknown way of life and please God, nevertheless nowhere has anyone ever gone up a pillar'" (*VD*, chap. 7). For English translations and commentary for three lives of Simeon, see Robert Dorn, *The Lives of Simeon Stylites* (Kalamazoo, 1992). See also the striking film *Simeon of the Desert* (*San Simeon del Desierto*), directed and written by Luis Bunuel, 1965.
18. *VD*, chap. 8. In one case, Daniel's travel is not of his own volition: jealous clergy suspicious of the Syrian holy man order church workers first to use

crowbars to pry open the door of the pagan temple Daniel has cleansed of demons and then they force the holy man to go to the capital to face the archbishop, *VD*, chap. 19.

19. *VD*, chap. 9. In chap. 14 we are told that Daniel is inspired by Antony to fight the demons in a pagan temple.
20. *VD*, chap. 10. There was conflict there between Christians and Samaritans.
21. *VD*, chap. 10. The author sees the hand of Providence in Daniel's change of plans: "For if Palestine had not been unsettled at that time, the West would never have encountered such a great man," *VD*, chap. 11.
22. The modern Roumeli-Hissar, according to Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints,* 74. In discussing Emperor Justinian's sixth-century projects, Procopius mentions Anaplus in his *Buildings* (I.8.1): "And by erecting buildings he elaborated into a thing of great beauty the shores of the other two straits which I have just mentioned, in the following manner. There happened to be two sanctuaries dedicated to the Archangel Michael, standing opposite one another on either side of the strait, the one at the place called Anaplus, on the left bank as one sails toward the Euxine Sea, the other on the opposite shore." Procopius, vol. 7: *Buildings*, trans. H. B. Dewing (Cambridge, MA, 1960), 68-71.
23. Gk. *naos*. Originally "temple" or "shrine," it came also to mean "church" (see G.W.H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1969), 897AB; Eusebius, for example, used it this way: *HE* 10.2.1, *VC* 3.45, 3.50, and 4.46), which explains the mistranslation by Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints,* 14.
24. *VD*, chap. 15. His temple stay is described in chaps. 14-20. The window appears to have had another important function: when for at least a second time Daniel had to fight the temple demons, "he drove all of them out the window": *VD*, chap. 18.
25. Cf. Simeon's life, in which he received twice daily the throng that surrounded his pillar, giving them moral counsel and settling their disputes. The ladder to Daniel's column was attached only at his request. When the archbishop visited in order to ordain Daniel, he asked the holy man to "Order, I beg you, the ladder be put up in order for me to come up and receive a perfect blessing." Daniel initially resists, but once the archbishop Gennadius ordains him a priest from down below, there is no longer a point to refusing the archbishop access, and so "the righteous one ordered the ladder to be put up, and the archbishop went up . . .": *VD*, chap. 42-43. It appears that on Sundays the saint habitually allowed access: "Because it was Sunday the holy man had asked the ladder to be placed against the column," *VD*, chap. 37.
26. *VD*, chaps. 15 and 18, respectively. The fight against demons pervades the *Life of Antony*. For similar battles with demons, cf. Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, trans. Tim Vivian and Apostolos Athanassakis (Kalamazoo, 2003), passim.
27. *VD*, chap. 16. For an examination of how Daniel gained his spiritual authority through his battle with demons, see Miriam Raub Vivian, "Daniel and the Demons: The Battle against Evil as Central to the Authority of the Monk," *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001): 191-197.

28. *VD*, chap. 16.
29. This fear of demons was real and potent. Norman Baynes provides an apt analogy for modern readers, acknowledging that we need to use some imagination to recover "a sense of the burden" felt by Christians in Late Antiquity: "If we believed that the myriad bacilli about us were each and all inspired by a conscious will to injure man we might then gain a realization of the constant menace which broods over human life in the biographies of Byzantine saints," Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints,* xii. For an examination of consensus on *daimones* among third-century intellectuals, see Heidi Marx-Wolf's chapter in this volume: "A Strange Consensus: Demonological Discourse in Origen, Porphyry, and Iamblichus."
30. *Miles Christi*. With a precedent in Christian scripture (see, e.g., the deutero-Pauline letter 2 Tim. 2.3), and references to Antony as a soldier for Christ battling demons, it is no surprise to see this become a standard image in hagiographic literature.
31. This is a significant point that Professor Drake has made with his students.
32. A central point of Peter Brown's "Rise and Function" article is that holy men such as Daniel functioned as advocates for those who had no one else to speak for them.
33. See *VD*, chap. 19, where, for example, when Archbishop Anatolius (449-458) first questions Daniel, the biographer notes that "the servant of God, through an interpreter, made known his blameless faith." In an amusing episode in chap. 17, jealous priests complain about Daniel, whom they dismiss with prejudice as unorthodox: "He is a Syrian by birth and we don't know how to talk with him."
34. *VD*, chap. 14.
35. *VD*, chap. 21.
36. *VD*, chap. 21. The reputation of Simeon was clearly widely known among people in the East.
37. *VD*, chap. 25.
38. *VD*, chap. 22.
39. *VD*, chap. 22. This act of literally and metaphorically passing the mantle from one saint to the next is also featured in the *Life of Antony*, chap. 91.8-9, and likely provided Daniel's biographer an appealing means of connecting his subject to that great holy man of Egypt. Athanasius' biography of Antony was a powerful model for subsequent hagiography, on which it had a strong influence.
40. *VD*, chap. 23. The language suggests a continued emphasis for Daniel's biographer on the duel or contest of the holy man against the Devil.
41. *VD*, chap. 23.
42. *VD*, chap. 26. This must have been roughly eleven feet high.
43. *VD*, chap. 27.
44. *VD*, chap. 28.
45. *VD*, chap. 28. According to the *Life*, this was not entirely true, for when he heard Gelanius complain while still in the capital, "the emperor for his part said nothing," *VD*, chap. 27.

46. *VD*, chap. 27.
47. *VD*, chap. 28.
48. *VD*, chap. 28. Daniel likely came a little more than halfway down the column's ladder.
49. *VD*, chaps. 29 and 34.
50. Cf. Mk. 10.14.
51. Monasteries were one of the most important sources of aid for the sick, and hospitals owe their origin in large part to the development of monasteries that served those who were ill. See Andrew T. Crislip, *From Monastery to Hospital: Christian Monasticism and the Transformation of Health Care in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor, 2005).
52. *VD*, chap. 29.
53. *VD*, chap. 20.
54. *VD*, chaps. 31 and 36.
55. *VD*, chap. 37. Others who receive healing include a prostitute (chap. 40), a leper (chap. 74), two demoniacs (chap. 77), a young girl (chap. 79), the seven-year-old son of a goldsmith (chap. 86), a wounded pilgrim (chap. 87), and a twelve-year-old mute child (chap. 89).
56. Gk. *xenoi*. The context here suggests foreigners, perhaps pilgrims or disciples who have come from foreign lands.
57. *VD*, chap. 57.
58. *VD*, chap. 74.
59. *VD*, chaps. 53-54.
60. *VD*, chap. 78.
61. *VD*, chap. 78.
62. This usurper, Basiliscus, publicly condemned the Council of Chalcedon, an extremely unpopular act in the eastern capital. See A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, vol. 1 (Baltimore, 1986 [1964]), 225.
63. Leo I died on January 18, 474. His seven-year-old grandson, Leo II, succeeded him, but the boy's father, Zeno, officially ruled as Augustus. Leo II died before the year was out, leading even the empress to conspire against her son-in-law Zeno and forcing his escape from the capital. In 476 Zeno was finally able to defeat Basiliscus, whom he ordered executed. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 221-225. For the dating of these events, see also Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saint*s, notes on pp. 81-82; and Michael Redies, "Die Usurpation des Basiliskos (475-476) im Kontext der aufsteigenden monophysitishchen Kirche," *L'argenterie romaine de l'antiquité tardive* 5 (1997): 213ff. Both authors rely on O. Seeck, *Die Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.: Vorarbeit zu einer Prosopographie der christlichen Kaiserzeit* (Stuttgart, 1911), 424.
64. *VD*, chap. 72. The holy man's defense of orthodoxy is a favorite theme throughout Athanasius' *Life of Antony* and one that became standard in subsequent saints' lives.
65. *VD*, chap. 75.
66. *VD*, chap. 83.

67. *VD*, chap. 45.
68. *VD*, chap. 45.
69. Peter Brown, "Rise and Function," 94.
70. "A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *The English Historical Review* 88 (Jan. 1973): 13. Edward Gibbon expressed it a bit more cynically: "A believing age was easily persuaded that the slightest caprice of an Egyptian or a Syrian monk had been sufficient to interrupt the eternal laws of the universe," *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J. B. Bury (London, 1914), chap. 37, p. 81.
71. M. Basil Pennington, ed., *One Yet Two: Monastic Tradition East and West* (Kalamazoo, 1973), 16.
72. See Peter Charanis, "The Monk as an Element of Byzantine Society," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 25 (1971), 76. He sees monasticism as a democratic institution. See also Peter Nagel, *Die Motivierung der Askese in der Alten Kirche und der Ursprung des Mönchtums* (Berlin, 1966), 89; he identifies the vast majority of monks in Egypt as originating in "the simple, Coptic rural population" as "field hands, farmers, and shepherds."
73. *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150-750* (London, 1971), 102.
74. *VD*, chaps. 30 and 57.
75. *VD*, chap. 34.
76. *VD*, chap. 64.
77. *VD*, chap. 58.
78. The *Life* quotes Titus taking a philosophical approach to renunciation: "All of a person's hard work goes toward acquiring wealth and goods in the world and pleasing people, but the single hour of his death makes him a stranger to all his possessions. Therefore it is better for us to serve God than people," *VD*, chap. 60. "Ascetic" is from the Greek *askesis*, "training."
79. *VD*, chap. 61.
80. Daniel died at age 84, after over thirty-three years on a pillar and nearly his whole life as a monk.

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8

TWO PHILOSOPHERS FROM GAZA

The ancient city of Gaza, on the coast of Palestine at the border between Judaea and Egypt, was the preeminent city of the Philistines, perhaps even the landing place of the Peleset during the invasions of the Peoples of the Sea. The Philistines were feared and despised by the children of Israel, and their name has subsequently come down through the centuries as a metaphor for uncultured louts. Today Gaza is an artificially constructed refugee society, miserable, violent, intolerant, crushed between the ancestral hatreds of two Stone Age religions. It is refreshing, therefore, to hark back to a period when Gaza enjoyed a reputation throughout the civilized world as a busy hub for a profitable trade in wine and spices and a renowned center of culture, rhetoric, and philosophy for Byzantine civic elites.[1]

Gaza became a free city of the Roman *imperium* by Pompey's settlement of the former Seleucid domains and was organized and reconstructed by the proconsul Gabinius in 57 BCE.[2] From that time it was little affected by the disorders of the civil war, or the subsequent Jewish wars, and during the next six centuries enjoyed the privileges of its location as a station for coastal trade between Alexandria and Antioch, on the one hand, and as a terminus for land trade coming through Petra, on the other. Despite low rainfall, the site is well watered by a high water table and has always been known for its fertile soil and the produce of its fields, orchards, and vineyards.[3] Like other prosperous centers, Gaza was slow to convert to Christianity and its temples were famous for their many and varied festivals. But Bishop Porphyry (395-420) devoted all his energies to converting the heathen by force. He elicited support from Constantinople, particularly from the empress Eudoxia, and with the assistance of imperial troops he oversaw the destruction of all the pagan sanctuaries and began the construction of churches. When it gradually became apparent to the Gazaeans that Christian churches could also be the focus of feasting and celebrations,[4] they began willingly to convert, until by the end of the fifth

century Gaza could be called one of the more enthusiastic Christian cities of the Levant.[5]

It is perhaps typical of a prosperous and cultured city that even its Christian theologians, although devout, showed the literary talent and spirit of inquiry of the older Greek philosophical schools. At the end of the fifth century the scholar and rhetorician Prokopios founded a school of literature and rhetoric that rivaled any to be found in Alexandria. Prokopios is known from his writings[6] and from the funeral oration by his student Choricius.[7] A contemporary was Zosimos, who wrote a rhetorical lexicon and commentaries on Lysias and Demosthenes, although none of his works are extant.[8] Prokopios and Zosimos were contemporaries of Timotheos, who wrote a treatise on animals in epic meter, of which a summary is extant (q.v. infra), and Aineias, author of a curious Platonic dialogue entitled Theophrastos, which portrayed the ancient philosopher arguing about the immortality of the soul.[9] Ioannes of Gaza wrote later, during the reign of Justinian, and left some Anakreonta (Bergk, *PLG* iii 339ff.) and an *Ekphrasis tou kosmikou pinakos*, a poem in hexameters describing a wall painting in a public bath, "an allegorical representation of the world and the powers of nature, which were represented personified in human form, such as Wisdom, Virtue, the Moon, the Four Winds, and Earth and her children."[10]

The intellectual fire of the ancient Greek philosopher, now respectably Christianized, can be seen in the work of the two writers whose work is discussed below.

TIMOTHEOS OF GAZA AND THE GRANDE CACCIA OF PIAZZA ARMERINA

Frank J. Frost

This is an essay that has lain in a drawer, unwritten, for twenty-eight years, for reasons that will become obvious. But for my friend and colleague Hal Drake I have resurrected it, because it describes a unique juncture of art and literature in Hal's world of Late Antiquity, a period whose denizens have always seemed to me a bit harried and rushed, perhaps realizing how late they were.

In June of 1980 my wife was eager to explore Sicily and to see the small village where her grandparents had been born. By the end of the month we had circled two thirds of the island counterclockwise to reach the

countryside north of Agrigento and, having visited the ancestral town, pushed on into the interior to spend the night near Enna, where Roman mythographers had located the door to the underworld through which Ceres' daughter had been abducted by Pluto.[11] The next day we visited the Villa Casale, near Piazza Armerina, where one of the largest collections of mosaics from antiquity can be found in situ. The most famous one is undoubtedly the so-called "Bikini girls," pictured in every history of ancient art. But far more arresting is the long hall of La Grande Caccia, bearing dozens of scenes illustrating the hunting of various birds and beasts. In the southern section of the hall can be found more specialized depictions: animals that are being captured alive, perhaps for the circus or for the private zoos favored by the rich. One image struck me immediately. A horseman is galloping up a gangplank onto a boat, whose occupants are getting ready to cast off, and with good reason. The horseman has kidnapped a tiger cub and is being pursued by the angry tigress, who is distracted by what seems to be another tiger cub on the ground. At the time I was reminded of the story told by Pliny (*NH* 8.66), describing the manner of capturing tiger cubs: the hunter, having discovered the tiger's cave, waits for the mother to be absent, then gathers up as many cubs as possible. For the tigress is the swiftest of animals; coming home she discovers the missing cubs and is off like the wind after the hunter, who is racing back to his boat. She catches up a third of the way and the hunter drops one of the cubs, which she carries back to her cave, then doubles back after the hunter again. He drops a second cub just as she is catching up again, with the same result; he regains his boat and casts off just in time, having successfully held on to the third cub. The story is derived from the extensive compendia of fabulous animal legends, perhaps going back to the *Indika* of Megasthenes or some other popular Hellenistic book of marvels. But Pliny will have had the report from the *Chorographia* of Pomponius Mela (3.43), which was published at the time of Claudius' invasion of Britain in 43, when an interest in strange foreign locales and fabulous animals coincided with the growing love of the Roman public for blood sports in the arena starring exotic beasts.

The capture of tiger cubs was evidently a famous metaphor, echoed by Martial, *Ep.* 8.26, Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 6.149, and others.[12] But a closer look at this mosaic of the *Grande caccia* reveals a variant to the stratagem used by the horseman. The artist seems to have preferred a later version of the hunting story. Claudian, *De raptu Proserpinae* 3.263f, says the hunter drops a mirror-like bowl, in which the tigress sees her own image and believes it to be her cub: *uitriae tardatur imagine formae*.[13] But the most detailed account of this style of tiger cub hunting is found in a manuscript

of Timotheos of Gaza, where it is paired with a description of a ruse by which griffins, no less, may be trapped (see frontispiece).

Timotheos was a *grammatikos*, born during the reign of the emperor Anastasios (491-518).[14] He is said to have written, in epic meter, a work about the birds and beasts of India, Arabia, Egypt, and Africa, in four books.[15] Gaza during the later empire was a famous intellectual center with a school of rhetoricians and poets, rivaling its near neighbor, Caesarea,[16] and Timotheos was a typical luminary. His work on animals is not extant, but there is preserved a fourteenth-century manuscript bearing a prose summary in the form of excerpts.[17] The epitomizer has eliminated whatever literary merit may have been in the original poem, just listing dubious data about exotic animals, one bit after another: for example, chapter 4 "On the hyena. That in alternate years it changes from male to female." In chapter 9 the tigress is paired with the griffin:

> On the tigress and the griffin. That in the war between Kronos and Zeus, wild beasts were born all over the earth from the blood of the Titans.
>
> That the beasts of Ethiopia are larger, and are most fearsome. One of which is the tigress, who conceives and bears offspring from the wind...
>
> That when she is absent, hunters kidnap the cubs, put them in [with?] bowls of glass, and when they are overtaken by the mother, who is most swift, they throw one bowl; by this ruse she is preoccupied and deceived by the form of the cub in the mirror. The horsemen escape, keeping the other animal...
>
> That the tigress leaps upon and seizes the griffin because the griffin steals her children; she does not let go until the griffin, in pain, throws itself and her into the sea.
>
> That the tigress often kills the griffin although it is even larger than a lion.
>
> That the chest and upper part of the griffin is that of a horse; the beak and wings are of a vulture; the tail and back of a horse.
>
> That the griffin is captured by men, who make quivers of its feathers and large vessels of its talons.
>
> That they bind an ox into a wagon upon which they place a weight. The griffin, being strong enough even to carry away an ox, winds its talons around the wagon, which then it cannot release. And not being able to lift such a weight it remains trapped. And that a man is hidden under the same wagon and when the griffin is trapped he falls on it and burns its wings.

The language of the epitomizer or his copyist is not entirely clear and there are several places where he seems to have inserted a word or two from another paragraph.[18] When I first read Timotheos I immediately recognized the method he described for kidnapping tiger cubs. The griffin story made little sense. But when I looked back at the picture of the mosaic I was surprised to see, directly behind the tiger scene, a portrayal of a griffin seizing what looked like a wooden cage with a man inside. Earlier commentators on the mosaics had been puzzled at the griffin scene: amid a section of the mosaic devoted to men catching animals, here was a griffin catching a man.[19] But the text of Timotheos explains perfectly. The man has hidden in a wooden cage to lure a griffin into sinking its claws into the wood. There is no ox in this variant and the cage is not a *hamaxa*, but otherwise the stratagem is obvious. The fact that Timotheos, writing sometime after 500, described two scenes from a fourth-century mosaic in the correct order, leads one to the conclusion that he must have seen the mosaics of the Grande Caccia themselves and have been impressed enough to insert the tigress and griffin story into his work on animals. This at least is the simplest conclusion. But it is equally possible that some other visitor to the villa near Piazza Armerina had reported the illustrated methods of capturing tigers and griffins and that Timotheos had profited from the report. *Ekphrasis* of works of art was a standard literary and rhetorical exercise during the second sophistic and later,[20] of which an example is the *Ekphrasis tou kosmikou pinakos* of Ioannes of Gaza.[21]

I believed that this remarkable coincidence should be more widely known and in the fall of 1980 I sent an abstract to the Archaeological Institute of America, proposing a paper on the subject of Timotheos and the mosaics of the Grande caccia. A final step was a bibliographical search, to make sure that someone had not anticipated my discovery. I am a historiographer and could never claim to be an art historian and I did not wish to be embarrassed by accusations of plagiarism at the AIA meeting. Therefore my heart sank as I was nearly finished thumbing through year after year of *L'année philologique*, to find, in 1975, an article by Chiara Settis Frugoni, "Il grifone e la tigre nella 'grande caccia' di Piazza Armerina" in *Cahiers Archéologique* for that year (pp. 21-32). Not only had Professor Settis Frugoni noted the coincidence; she had also identified several other examples in various media of tiger and griffin hunting and provided a thorough commentary and illustrations. It was apparent that she was not only an expert art historian but a fine historiographer as well. It was at that point that my article went into a drawer (and I withdrew the AIA paper). My only excuse in reviving it at this time (other than the traditional festschriftian opportunity for *vide tiroir*) is that the description

by Timotheos, which may well have been an elegant *ekphrasis* in his original epic, is a fascinating coincidence because for once both description and art work are extant.

CHORICIUS OF GAZA, *ORATION XIII*: RELIGION AND STATE IN THE AGE OF JUSTINIAN

Roberta Mazza

At the beginning of his career H. A. Drake translated and commented on the *Tricennial Orations* of Eusebius of Caesarea with brilliant insight into its historical context and an extensive discussion on politics and religion—two concepts hard to be separated in Late Antiquity.[22] A translation of an oration and a discussion of state and religion—a theme so central in Drake's production as a whole—in the age of Justinian could represent a homage to him by someone more comfortable with the sixth than with the fourth century CE.

Prominent member of the school of Gaza, student and heir of Procopius at the head of the school itself, Choricius left a corpus of speeches that only lately has started to receive the attention that it deserves.[23] This chapter focuses on one of the writings, the *Oratio XIII*, composed on the occasion of the emperor Justinian's (527-565) Brumalia, probably in the 530s. The text, of which I append an English translation,[24] is interesting because it sheds light on many aspects of culture and politics in the age of Justinian, such as the role of the schools of rhetoric in the construction of shared ideals for the Byzantine empire and the emperor's policy toward provinces and their cultural life.

First, the transformation of the festival itself under Justinian is a sort of case study to test how the *basileus* and his entourage were trying to abolish all the celebrations connected with the ancient polytheistic calendar. They followed a variety of strategies. While in some cases the Christian emperor prohibited pagan religious rites and festivals through laws and actions such as those at Athens and Philae,[25] on other occasions it was highly problematic to pursue this policy. The Brumalia festival, as we will see, is one of these difficult situations: the political and social aspects of the feast pushed Justinian to reinvent the meaning and style of celebration of the festival.

Second, the oration shows the interaction between local elite members and the court of Constantinople: in other words, the interaction between center and periphery in the Byzantine Empire. A provincial school of rhetoric, such as the one led by Choricius, educated the local elite to govern provinces and cities sharing a common culture with the rest of the empire. The author mentions and addresses two important aristocrats who held provincial political charges in that period, Summus and his brother Iulianus (*Or.* XIII, 14-15), in this way connecting the major theme of the celebration of the emperor's Brumalia to the praise of the local notables.[26] The oration makes it possible to analyze how different levels of Byzantine society were relating to each other and how the empire's identity was constructed as a result of these multiple interactions.

The Brumalia Festival in the Age of Justinian

An older work of J. R. Crawford and a more recent article by F. Perpillou-Thomas have demonstrated that an ancient Greco-Roman festival, the Bruma, developed gradually into the Byzantine Brumalia. The Byzantine Brumalia was a long holiday starting on November 24 and ending on December 17, clearly connected with a number of different pagan celebrations taking place around the winter solstice devoted to the chthonian cults.[27] During this holiday each day was associated with a letter from the Greek alphabet. People would celebrate their own Brumalia by hosting guests for dinner; so Justinian's Brumalia were celebrated on December 2, the tenth day of the festival, which corresponded to the tenth letter of the Greek alphabet, iota (for the name Iustinianus). Sources demonstrate that the festival was popular. For example, an inscription from Corinth indicates December as the month of the Brumalia.[28] And in a poem devoted to the months, collected in the *Anthologia Palatina*, November proclaims: "I bring a pleasant banquet for the name of everyone."[29] Further, Agathias Scholasticus describes the earthquake that struck Constantinople between December 14 and 23 of 557 as having happened during the coldest part of the winter, when the banquets for the names were celebrated.[30]

The Brumalia celebration "name by name" appears only in sixth-century sources, and it is clearly defined by John Lydus as a recent development. In fact, in his treatise *On Months* (158), following his antiquarian tastes, Lydus explains the origin of the festival as linked with ancient pagan cults. He writes that during the winter the Romans used to suspend all activities, such as agriculture or war. This suspension was a result both of the cold season and the shortage of light, which, in particular, explains the etymology of the word: *Bruma* meant the shortest days, so *Brumalia* were the winter celebrations. Then the passage describes

some of the main aspects of the ancient festival, sacrificing pigs to Demeter and goats to Dionysos and offering special honey and fruitcakes to the priests of the same Demeter. Lydus emphasizes that those cakes were still offered to the priests (presumably Christian ones), and then he adds: "In fact to celebrate name by name during the Brumalia is a recent innovation; more truly these festivals are called Kronians, and this is the reason why also the church condemns them." Lydus' text is important because it proves and explains the pagan side of the celebration, which the church condemned. The attitude of the church is also confirmed by the canons of the Trullan Council (691-692) and the Roman synod of 743.[31]

Lydus' passage also indicates the social relevance of the Brumalia and its transformation. On the one hand, people were still bringing cakes to the priests without understanding the original meaning of that ritual act; on the other hand, the "name by name" celebration had just been introduced. Both practices clearly demonstrate that the festival was losing its ancient religious dimension and was evolving into a more secular celebration.[32] Lydus' words become even more meaningful when compared with a passage from John Malalas, where the beginning of the festivity is connected to the birth of Rome:

> Because of this[33] Romus [sic] devised what is known as the Brumalia, declaring, it is said, that the emperor of the time must entertain his entire senate and officials and all who serve in the palace, since they are persons of consequence, during the winter when there is a respite from fighting. He began by inviting and entertaining first those whose names began with alpha, and so on, right to the last letter; he ordered his senate to entertain in the same way. They too entertained the whole army, and those they wanted. The *pandoura*-players from each military unit went in the evening to the houses of those who had invited them to dine the next day and played, so that the unit should know that they would be entertained by that person the following day. This custom of the Brumalia has persisted in the Roman state to the present day.[34]

In this reconstruction Romulus in person started inviting his entourage during the period in which the daylight was the shortest for enjoying the break from war. Malalas' passage is interesting because in order to ascribe public festivals and institutions of his own day to the mythical founder of Rome, he gives us a lively description of the contemporary situation. In his interpretation the celebration was court-centered: the emperor and the nobles were the core of the ritual. The goal of the institution of the festival seems to be double: on the one hand, to strengthen the bounds

between the emperor and his entourage, on the other, to reproduce the same kind of ties between the aristocracy and the rest of the people. In fact, Romulus not only started to invite his court, the aristocracy, and the army but he also prescribed that the senate should offer banquets in the same way. Both authors attest the slow transformation of pagan celebrations into political and social gatherings more and more detached from religion. Only Lydus, however, openly demonstrates and denounces the ambiguity of the process.[35]

The Emperor, the Court, and Local Elites

Other sources on the Brumalia confirm the description given by Malalas and Lydus and introduce us to the second point, that is, the interaction among local elites, the emperor, and the court or the wider theme of the relationship between the center and peripheries in the Byzantine Empire. Two wine accounts from Egypt testify that senators celebrated their Brumalia just as the literary sources describe:

> to the people cited below on the happy Brumalia of our master, the most magnificent Apion, Hathyr 28 (November 24), XIV indiction, 33 wine's *dipla* in this way:
> to the *buccellarii* 12 *dipla*,
> to the *spatharii* 8 *dipla*;
> to the Goths 4 *dipla*,
> to the cooks 6 *dipla*,
> to the pandoura-players [*pandouristai*] 2 *dipla*,
> to the servants [*structores*] 1 *diploun*, as stated before.[36]

These lines are among the many annual entries registered by the head cellarers (*oinocheiristai*) of the Apiones estate in Oxyrhynchus.[37] The Flavii Apiones were a very well-known family originating in Egypt, probably from Herakleopolis and Oxyrhynchus. In the first part of the fifth century they became members of the senate at Constantinople and then their fortune increased, especially during Justinian's reign, when Strategius II, at the end of a brilliant career, became *magister officiorum* and then *comes sacrarum largitionum* around 535-537 and his son, Apion II, reached the ordinary consulate in 539. By a strange coincidence, as I will explain, Strategius II is connected with a personality from Palestine mentioned in Choricius' oration.

The last part of Choricius' *Oration XIII* is evidence for the political and social roles of the senatorial elite in the provinces of the Byzantine Empire. An interesting aspect of the text is its reference to Summus and his brother Iulianus, since in this way Choricius linked the praise of the

emperor to the praise of two prominent aristocrats of Palestine. Information on the two brothers is mostly given by Choricius, but a few other sources, as we will see, mention them as well. For example, Procopius' *Wars* reports the role of Summus and Iulianus as imperial representatives in some diplomatic missions connected to the Byzantine and Persian hostilities in the area bordering the provinces of Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt, in which the Arabs were also involved. Summus was charged by Justinian with the above-mentioned Strategius II to settle a dispute between two prominent Arab leaders, Arethas (Harith, leader of the Ghassanid Arabs, Roman allies) and Alamundares (Mundir, leader of the Lakhmid Arabs, Persian allies), who were arguing over the control of Strata, that is, the Strata Diocletiana, the fortified road connecting Palmyra and Damas (*B.P.* II, I, 9-11):[38]

> The Emperor Justinian therefore entrusted the settlement of the disputed points to Strategius, a patrician and *comes sacrarum largitionum*, and a man of wisdom and of good ancestry besides, and with him Summus, who had commanded [*egesamenos*] the troops in Palestine. This Summus was the brother of Julian, who not long before had served as envoy to the Aethiopians and Homeritae.[39]

The aorist participle *egesamenos* is a key point: translations up to now have implied that Summus held the charge before the Strata quarrel, leaving him without any title at the moment of the mission. Even if this situation were possible, there are two considerations: First, the aorist has a qualitative meaning; Procopius would have used the perfect to denote a previous and terminated office. Second, this is the only place where Procopius cites Summus, so it seems strange that no indication of his rank and office is given; whereas Strategius is mentioned as *patricius* and *comes sacrarum largitionum*. Also the lines referring to Iulianus need to be considered in dating the events: according to Procopius, the diplomatic mission to the Aethiopians and Himyarites took place before 530/531, when Abraham took power, and in our passage the event is said to have happened not long before.[40]

The dispute between Harith and Mundir has been dated around 536-537 by some scholars, to 539-540 by others, who relate it to the facts immediately preceding the Persian invasion of 540.[41] In Procopius' reconstruction of the events, the dispute was fuelled by the Persian king, who was trying in many ways to find an excuse to open hostilities after the peace of 532 because he was worried about Belisarius' victories in the West and the increasing power of the Byzantine emperor. The situation was perceived in these terms by Strategius, who advised disengagement

from the quarrel and leaving Strata to the enemies in order to avoid going to war for such an unproductive and unimportant region. But Summus was not of the same opinion. According to Procopius—who seems to stigmatize him—he insisted that the Romans must not surrender the country. As a matter of fact, Khushru asserted that Justinian had broken the treaty since he had tried, through his envoy Summus, to bring some of Mundir's forces to the Roman side. Some letters, allegedly written by Justinian to the Lakhmid leader and also to the Huns, were supposed to have been found, but Procopius concludes that he does not know if this was true or just an expedient.[42]

Procopius' evaluation of Summus' conduct is ambiguous, if not negative. Conversely, Choricius' portrait is clearly positive, given the genre of the writing and the social ties linking the sophist to the political authorities of his province. Actually, the evaluation of the strategic importance of Strata is undoubtedly a sign of Summus' military abilities, as some scholars have recently noted.[43] In the Brumalia oration Choricius generically describes Summus' role as peacekeeper and he notes his honesty (*Or.* XIII.14), but the text is rather vague and does not indicate which episodes the writer had in mind. We can even wonder if Choricius was just relating Summus' career as a whole, since he certainly had been involved in more than one episode of this kind. Proof of Summus' experience comes from the most interesting piece concerning the man: Choricius' oration in his honor, which offers quite a detailed summary of his career.

The piece is entitled *Impromptu encomium to Summus, endoxotatos stratelates*.[44] This reading indicates that Summus received the same office twice and that at the moment of the declamation he was in his second mandate, which was long in duration (*Or.* IV.3). Choricius depicts Summus' career as beginning in Antioch, where he was acting as *strategos* during the time of an earthquake, either the one in 526 or that of November 528.[45] The latter is more likely since the oration indicates that the name of the city changed, without openly mentioning the new name. Antioch was in fact re-founded as Theopolis after the second disaster happened. Unfortunately, the oration cannot be dated more precisely, since Procopius of Caesarea in his *Buildings* (probably written around 554) still refers to Antioch as Theopolis (cfr. *De Aed.* II, X, 2; V, V, 1).[46] Nevertheless, 540 may be a *terminus ante quem*, because Choricius would have very probably mentioned the Persian sack of Antioch and the end of the so-called Eternal Peace. According to the encomium (chap. 11), for helping the Antiochenes recover from the earthquake, Justinian then gave Summus a charge in Palestine, the province where he came from and

where—according to the rhetor—he came to have a public role for the first time.

This first appointment is problematic, however, because of the testimony of another source on Summus, Cyril of Scythopolis' *Vita Sabae* (chap. 67).[47] In August/September 520, Summus is said to have been in Jerusalem, where he suggested that the archbishop call for Sabas' help against a long drought that was affecting the area.[48] The text emphasizes that Summus was a man of experience and that he already had received political appointments (*politikas archas*). A way to solve the inconsistency is to interpret these *politikai archai* as municipal or minor provincial positions (mainly civil appointments) while later on Summus' career became more military in nature. The pattern of his career has some parallels, for instance, in Egypt. The members of the Apion family in the late fifth/early sixth century appear in papyri as holding municipal charges and later on or at the same time as having higher-ranking positions in the provincial and imperial administration.[49]

It can be argued that Summus' first military position in Palestine started after the 528 earthquake in Antioch, while the Samaritans' revolt of 529 was still going on or was just finished, leaving the provinces of Palestine I and II in a bad economic condition.[50] In fact, the *Vita Sabae* confirms that in 531-532 Summus was in Palestine and he already had the title *gloriosissimus*. Sabas was sent to Constantinople to help the Palestinians recover from the losses caused by the conflict. The saint's requests to Justinian included ordering Summus to build a fortress in the desert at public expense to protect the monasteries from Saracen attacks. The emperor then sent a written order to Summus to deliver one thousand solidi from the public treasury to the saint; moreover, he ordered relocated troops there to protect the area permanently (*V. Sabae,* chap. 71-73). According to Cyril, however, Saba died soon after (December 532) and although Summus delivered the money to his successor, Melitas, the fortress was never actually built (*V. Sabae,* chap. 83).[51]

According to Choricius, during the first appointment Summus was concerned with troublemakers and restoration of the city's vitality, and this is in accordance with *Vita Sabae*. Then he left office (*Or.* IV.13), and Choricius casually mentions his successors, using the plural. This implies that more than one man held the position and that there must have been some years in between the two appointments. Now, what was Summus' office? The secondary literature refers to him as *dux* of Palestine I.[52] As we have already seen, in the encomium he is identified as *strategos*, which is a rather vague term, used in literary sources for different kinds of generals. The encomium's title, however, reports a more specific titulature: *endoxotatos stratelates*. This indicates a high senatorial rank (*gloriosissimus*),

already attested in *V. Sabae*, and a military office, such as *magister militum* (*stratelates*).

The role, position, and number of *magistri militum* in the sixth-century army is still a matter of debate and a subject to be studied in depth.[53] According to evidence in the encomium, however, it is possible to argue that Summus was sent to Palestine as dux (whose usual rank predicate is *peribleptos*, *spectabilis*), bearing at the same time a higher military rank as *gloriosissimus magister militum*. The combination of the two titles *dux* and *stratelates* is attested for some Egyptian dukes, such as Athanasius, *dux Thebaidis*, and Theodosius, *dux Arcadiae*.[54] In theory, *duces* led garrisons or territorial soldiers stationed at the frontiers, while mobile troops were under the authority of *magistri militum*. According to *Not. Dig. Or.* I, there were two *praesentales* in Constantinople and three *magistri militum* of Illyricum, Thrace, and Oriens, to whom in 528 Justinian added a *magister militum per Armeniam*. Recent syntheses on the late antique eastern army indicate, however, that the two armies overlapped to a certain extent. Moreover the title *magister militum* was sometimes purely honorary.[55] In my opinion, generals such as Summus, Athanasius, and Theodosius held both titles as a way of honoring their whole career and increasing their power in situations and areas of conflict. In fact, Athanasius in upper Thebais was facing the menace of the Blemmyes and Nobades, while Theodosius had the title in a document, *P. Prag.* I, 64 from the Fayyum, dated 636, after the Persian rule over Egypt and before the Arab invasion. These generals were leading different kinds of troops: the frontier soldiers as well as mobile troops composed of regular troops and *buccellarii*.[56]

Choricius praises Summus' role as peacekeeper when Saracens were involved, not only in Palestine (see *Or.* IV.16-20) but also in Egypt (probably in areas close to the borders, *Or.* IV.21, 22). As proved by the issue of the Strata, Summus must have had great experience in this respect. The encomium (*Or.* IV.32) informs us that he used to have an Arab counselor, probably an interpreter and cultural expert. As a matter of fact, in between the two appointments to the same office in Palestine, Summus must have held an office in Arabia. Choricius especially praised his role in tax distribution in that province. He fairly divided the burden of taxation among the inhabitants of the province. He respected each of the three social strata that Choricius distinguishes as constituting Arabian society (the rich, the poor, and those in between), and he avoided any attempt at bribery on the part of the provincial landowners (*Or.* IV.25-28). All this information seems to suggest that Summus was probably acting as governor of the province rather than as *dux* of Arabia. But we can go further on this point. As I will show in detail later, the years in between the two appointments as dux of Palestine correspond to 533–535/36.

This means that Summus held the charge in Arabia just before Justinian promulgated *Novel* 102 on the moderator Arabiae (June 536). In his list of Roman governors of this province, M. Sartre does not include Summus, but he reports a Flavius Anastasius, cited in two inscriptions dating 529 and 533, and then a Paullus, attested by an inscription of 535.[57] Sartre notices that the two men are mentioned as *dux* and *archon* on official inscriptions, that is to say, they were openly and *de iure* exercising the two functions. In the prologue of *Novel* 102 Justinian draws a picture of the situation in Arabia. The civil governor, who was supposed to collect taxes, was too weak because of his low rank and the increasing power of the dukes, the local magnates, and the *phylarch*s (chiefs of Arab tribes); then the two charges were conferred on one man, a *dux*, who acted as governor as well. But the situation did not improve; on the contrary these *duces* concentrated only on their own profit and consequently the emperor decided to separate the roles, creating the civil moderator with a higher rank and increased power.[58] In light of these sources, Summus' career becomes plausible and fits into the main pictures: he was probably sent to Arabia as dux and archon, because of both his previous civil and military experience and his knowledge of the Arabs.[59]

Novel 103, promulgated by Justinian in 536 to transform Palaestina I into a proconsular province, also contains some information that clarifies Summus' role and career in the Diocesis Orientis.[60] One of the emperor's concerns was the need to put some troops under the authority of the governor, given his role in collecting taxes and administering justice. In this respect, the Novel clearly distinguishes the duties of the governor and of the *dux* in the province. In chapter 3 Justinian felt the need to state that neither the dux nor the *endoxotatos strategos* could deprive the governor of his troops for fear of eventual tumults or sedition. The second military office mentioned, which in theory could coincide with Summus' titulature, is not cited again in the text. Sources imply that the expression indicates *magister militum Orientis*, as becomes clear from what follows:

> The eminent general of that department [i.e., the *dux*], and he who is invested with Proconsular magistracy, shall be entirely distinct from each other, so far as their respective duties are concerned. For the former will have charge of the troops known as *limitanei*, and *foederati*, and of the entire body of soldiers in the province, with the exception of those allotted to the service of the Proconsul; while the latter will have jurisdiction over private persons as well as civil matters, and will command the military forces placed at his disposal.[61]

The passage indicates first that the *dux* commanded not only *limitanei* and *foederati* but also the rest of the troops, except those assigned to the governor; second, that in Palestine there were only two officers having supreme military powers: the governor and the *dux*. This last point seems to confirm the identification of the above-mentioned *gloriosissimus strategos* of *Novel* 103 with the *magister militum per Orientem*, the only other authority who eventually could have intervened in the region from Antioch.

The situation depicted by the sources is that of a territory menaced by riots and violence, tensions resulting from the different religious and ethnic identities coexisting in the area, pressure on the frontiers, and social conflicts connected to the economic crisis caused by this instability as well as by natural disasters such as droughts and earthquakes.

Now we can go back and try to establish some more aspects of Summus' career. We have the fairly certain dates of 531-533 given by Cyril of Scythopolis: Sabas' mission to Constantinople took place from April to September 531, and Summus was surely in charge during that period, probably until the beginning of 533, since he is the one who delivered the money to Melitas, Sabas' successor. At this point another source must be introduced: the Chronicle of Malalas on the Samaritan riot of 529,[62] since both Cyril and Choricius seem to connect Summus' first mandate to the Samaritan disorders. But quite surprisingly, Malalas appears not to mention Summus at all. He reports that the duke involved in the events was Theodoros "Simos," who later was removed from office and replaced by Irenaios the Antiochene. The passage is somewhat inconsistent with what precedes it because Theodoros seemed to have acted well and Justinian's action appears unreasonable. Moreover, the corresponding insertion of Malalas in Constantinus Porphyrogenitus' *De insidiis* is even more puzzling. Here there is a Theodotos the Great (Megas) as *dux* of Palestine, fighting in the context of a larger army commanded by the ex-prefect Irenaeus.

In his book on Justinian, the Jews, and the Samaritans, Rabello rightly recognized that Malalas confused a Theodoros—who was *dux* of Palestine in 529—and Summus, who probably became *dux* only later in 530/531.[63] Rabello correctly saw in the two nicknames "Simos" and "Megas" a bad rendering of the name Summus; moreover, he pointed out that this Theodoros/Theodotos could not have been the same Summus. In fact, Summus, as we have already seen, is a very well-known individual in the *Vita Sabae,* which reports that the duty to suppress the revolt was conferred on the *gloriosissimi* Theodore and John. Moreover, neither Choricius nor Cyril ever attributed the name of Theodoros or Theodotos to Summus. To sum up: it is plausible that Theodoros—probably the correct name, as mentioned by Cyril—was a duke of Palestine later

deposed and replaced by Irenaeus from Antioch or Summus; Summus must have become *dux* in 530-531, maybe in connection with the Christian anti-Samaritan disorders that took place in 530 and so irritated Justinian. Malalas' conflation and confusions can be easily explained by the contemporary presence of many different generals in the region under attack.

Choricius informs us about another *dux* of Palestine, Aratius (see the encomium to *dux* Aratius and archon Stephanus). He was in charge while Stephanus was governor of the province. *Novel* 103 of 536 reports that at the time of the reform Stephanus was already governor and Justinian confirmed him as new proconsul.[64] Aratius must have been one of those successors mentioned in the Summus' encomium: he is to be identified with the Persarmenian Aratius, who after fighting at Lazica then joined the Roman army and later went to Italy with Belisarius' army in 535.[65] This implies that his position in Palestine must have ended earlier. Unfortunately, we cannot be more precise about the second mandate of Summus. If we accept the date of 539 for the Strata question and translate Procopius' participle aorist as past, we can infer that the appointment must have been taken place around those same years and just ended in 538/539. Following this chronology, 535/536–538/539 could be the years of both the second ducate of Summus and the composition of his encomium and the Brumalian oration.

Conclusion

Among the main goals of Justinian's policy was the suppression of what remained of paganism. Indeed, a reading of the *titula* of the *Codex* devoted to religious matters confirms this view; pagans were criminals and polytheism was a public crime. Justinian made every effort to eliminate all traces of ancient religious practices. These actions must be evaluated within his overall religious policy, which aimed to have Christianity—in its Chalcedonian form—as the only religion of the Byzantine Empire and possibly also of its allies. Sources reveal the difficulties connected with this policy, however, especially when applied to ceremonials and public celebrations. As heir to Greco-Roman traditions, the Byzantine Empire had to deal with a long-lasting and well-articulated series of rituals, festivities, and public manifestations of power. Thus, analysis of the case study of the Brumalia sheds lights on the process of Christianization of the empire, a process that was long and complicated by the political and social aspects of all these practices: religious celebrations of pagan origins were tightly bound to the performance of power and court rituals. Moreover, because of their long tradition, these festivities were the basis of the calendar, and thus they shaped the way people lived their lives.

Even when they lost their original meaning and purpose, these rites continued to be celebrated by citizens of the empire as traditional occasions for hospitality and socializing. Some of these festivals, such as the Brumalia, were simply impossible to eliminate. In such cases, Justinian reshaped and reinvented the meanings and purposes of the feast in order to make it both acceptable from a religious point of view and useful for constructing a common cultural identity throughout the different provinces of the empire.

Choricius' *Oration XIII* provides an opportunity for us to understand how the center, that is, the emperor and the court at Constantinople, interacted with the periphery, that is, the provinces and their elite. Among the many qualities of Summus, Choricius mentions his participation in and sponsoring of civic festivals. The empire was still relying on cities and their way of life for building a shared identity in the different regions that made up the *oecumene*. Justinian's efforts to strengthen the bonds between the center and periphery of the Byzantine Empire went in many directions: he reorganized the administrative frame of the state in the widest sense. He not only reformed military and civil offices in the provinces but he also tried to control as much as possible public consensus manifestations such as festival and ceremonies, remodeling them when necessary as in the case of the "too pagan" Brumalia.

APPENDIX

Oration XIII

I am not going to give a full textual commentary on the oration but rather an outline of some themes and topics directly connected to the Brumalia festival and the historical context of its composition.

Although there are some obscurities in the language and style of the *dialexis*, the structure of the piece is fairly clear. The oration was probably delivered on the occasion of the festival at the presence of the Gaza authorities. Summus is probably mentioned because of his high military rank, since the Brumalia were linked with the suspension from war and they seem to have been celebrated especially by soldiers, as Malalas' text and the wine accounts clearly indicate.

The content can be summarized as follows:

1-3 Choricius develops the theme that the emperor's dignity is so great that no one is able to laud him properly. Through citations from Pindar and Homer, the rhetor explains that ancient poets thought it impossible to celebrate thoroughly Zeus' munificence toward humankind. Accordingly, he will not ask the Muses to help him laud the emperor on the day of his Brumalia but rather help him explain the origins of the festival.

4-9 The author introduces the theme of war and the necessity to pause from fighting. The pause from war was one of the main characteristics of the Brumalia

festival's origins as depicted by Malalas and Lydus. Choricius explains that sometimes strife is the cause of good things, such as the celebration of feasts. He then gives a number of examples: the victory of Athens over Thebes and its celebration (6), the victory of Alexander over the Persians and the celebratory banquets he organized (7-8), and the Roman custom of not fighting in the season just preceding winter (9).

10-13 The reference to the Roman convention of avoiding war around the time of winter gives Choricius the opportunity to introduce the theme of the celebration "letter by letter" and thus to praise the emperor through acclaiming the letter iota. Theodora— whose *Brumalia* were celebrated the day before (since theta is just before iota in the Greek alphabet)—and the praise of the imperial couple's harmony are themes inserted into the encomium of the emperor.

14-15 Summus is introduced into the oration as taking part to the festival. Choricius speaks directly to him, mentioning also his brother.

16 Closing of the oration. The rhetor defines the encomium as impromptu and begs the audience's pardon for not having displayed all the usual rhetorical devices.

Translation

For the Brumalia of the emperor Justinian. Impromptu.

The discourse (*dialexis*) recognizes that the virtue of the emperor shines through even without an oration, but it is moved by pleasure to pronounce the words that the occasion offers.

1. Pindar wrote in verse that even the gods hesitate to celebrate Zeus' munificence toward humankind. It seemed, indeed, I believe, to the poet that it was the greatest encomium to Zeus if none of the Olympians dared to laud him.

2. Accordingly, for Pindar Zeus just sat as the ruler of everything, and the gods stood by in silence and were amazed at the splendor of the sight; when Zeus asked if they needed something else, the gods replied that one thing was lacking in his creations, that he did not create anyone who could articulate praises commensurate with what he created.

3. But since Telemachus, still young, praised the king of Sparta for his prosperity and while praising him was unable to bear the wonder in silence, and turning his head gently aside to Pisistratos—both in fact having come together to Atreus' son [i.e., Menelaus]—said: "It seems to me that today you and I are hosted at the court of Zeus!"[66] Well let us ask the Muses, in Homeric style, to leave Olympus and to describe not "who it was that first came to face the king"[67] (for there is no one who went straight on to him—not even "if there is a wild dog," as the army of Priam was described by Homer). Indeed, it does not seem to me the case to ask the Muses to sing this [encomium] but to explain the reason for the festival.

4. I pray that strife between both gods and men will cease and I certainly impute it [i.e., the strife] to the poet, since he wrote the wrath of Achilles as prologue of the poem, even if I see that sometimes it becomes a forerunner of good things.

5. And that it [i.e., the wrath of Achilles and the war] became an occasion of friendship among the companions of Diomedes and Glaukos, I care about less than the fact that it became the reason for feasts.

6. Once upon a time the community of the Athenians, when Tyche smiled on them in Thebes, enjoyed themselves with public sacrifices, and the city was full of auspicious stories; it is pleasant indeed to enquire about and to listen to stories of victory and success.

7. And it is said that Alexander, son of Philip—of course, it does not occur to me to believe the myths according to which he, a human being, was the son of Zeus—when Persia was seized, offered a royal banquet and proposed toasts in honor of friendship to the guests.

8. But the young Macedonian was quick to anger and fond of war and he never poured libations to peace; and indeed he was not having peaceful thoughts during the meal, instead he ordered that the flute player play the song of battle during the banquet. The Romans did not need the good warning of Herodotus, they knew well that for humankind time cannot be all for toiling.

9. Then suffering all these distresses during the good season, with the winter already approaching, they celebrated a cessation of hostilities, assuming that it was not out of place if the Scythians—a pastoral tribe, among whom life is wild and *humanitas* is not held as a custom—knew a break from labor and celebrated a festival in honor of the demon, whom they called Iphigenia in their own language, during which they sacrificed publicly not customary and institutional offerings, that is, foreign men, but victims considered sacred by everybody, and on the contrary they themselves, who were Romans and honored the good order with pious awe, should keep on fighting endlessly.

10. So they used to celebrate a festival for each letter [of the alphabet]. And somehow it seems to me, when considering it, that the one of this present day [i.e., the letter iota] is indeed imperial. In fact it is an image and a symbol straight and plain and free from embroideries, as in turn, for us, the emperor "sits in judgment with fair decisions"[68] according to the Askraian [i.e. Hesiod], if the tragic discourse wants the myth as simple truth.

11. And indeed the letter is easy for everyone and old men, young people and children equally write it without trouble. In fact the emperor distributes goods not according to the measures of age, but he grants that everyone to draw from the same stream.

12 And if it has ever occurred to you to count the syllables [of the emperor's name], you have realized, I guess, that it suitably prevails in number of letters [over all the others];[69] for the emperor indeed is the greatest of all the dignities.

13. It was convenient, as it must be, that he was also not separated by his spouse in the alphabet; even in the alphabet, it appears that there is a common and shared harmony between them. And in fact no intermediary appears to divide the letters between them.[70]

14. And whatever decisions seem good to the emperor improve human life. I absolutely praise and commend them too and not even Momos, so to speak, would criticize them. And to me, while considering which one among these [decisions] is the best, suddenly appeared Summus as leader of the choir, Summus who is invulnerable from the strokes of gold [i.e., incorruptible] and who after a

long time brought us, as a light, Peace, which was for a long period under threat;[71] and she [i.e., Peace] was no less needed [at present] than when Comedy brought her to Dionysos.

15. But as the saying goes, let the man be assisted by the brother. Knowing this proverb very well, you do not rely upon your own nature in every respect and although you are quick to understand and to accomplish fully whatever you might think, nevertheless you make your brother a partner in your decisions, your brother who came to men as a model of Hermes, as Aristides would say.

16. Having prepared such a banquet, I came to you, my friends; but the time, being short, did not permit me to gather the usual "cooks of words."[72]

NOTES

1. Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. Gaza.
2. Josephus, *Ant.* 14.5.3.
3. Carol A. M. Glucker, *The City of Gaza in the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, BAR International Series 325 (Oxford, 1987), 12.
4. As later described by Choricius.
5. The career of Porphyry is described in detail by the bishop's protegé, Marcus Diaconus, ed. H. Grégoire and M. A. Kugener (Paris, 1930); G. Downey, *Gaza in the Early Sixth Century* (Norman, 1963), 14-32.
6. *Procopii gazaei epistolae et declamationes*, ed. A. Garzya and N. J. Loenertz (Rome, 1963).
7. Chor. *Or.* 7, ed. Foerster-Richtsteig; on Gaza and his school most recently C. Saliou, ed., *Gaza dans l'antiquité tardive: Archeologie, rhéthorique, et histoire* (Salerno: Helios, 2005).
8. *Suda* s.v. Zosimos "of Gaza or Askalon."
9. His extant letters collected in *Enea di Gaza: Epistole,* ed. L. M Positano (Naples, 1962).
10. Downey, *Gaza in the Early Sixth Century,* 111. On all scholars, see Glucker, *The City of Gaza*, 51-54; cf. schol. Ioannes gaz., *FgrHist* 652 T 2.
11. Ovid, *Fasti* 4.422 sq.
12. Steier, "Tiger," *RE* ii.11 (1936) 951.
13. See also Claudian's contemporary, Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* 6.4 (Migne, *Patr. Lat.*14, p. 249f.) for the same stragagem.
14. *Suda* s.v. Timotheos, Jacoby, *FGrHist* 652 T 1.
15. Schol. Ioannes of Gaza, *FGrHist* 652 T 2; cf Tzetzes, *Chil.* 4.166.
16. See Downey and Glucker, supra, nn. 3 and 5.
17. M. Haupt, "Excerpta ex Timothei gazaei libris de animalibus," *Hermes* 3 (1869): 1-30. Some excerpts are also identified in S. Lambros, ed., *Supplementum Aristotelicum I: Aristophanes historiae animalium epitome subjunctis Aeliani Timotheii aliorum eclogis* (Berlin, 1885).
18. I thank my colleague Apostolos Athanassakis for this suggestion and for his assistance in translating.
19. G. Gentili, *La villa erculia di Piazza Armerina: I mosaici figurati* (Milan, 1959), 22.

20. E.g.: The *Imagines* of Philostratos and Kallistratos, ed. A. Fairbanks, in the Loeb edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931).
21. P. Friedländer, ed., *Ioannes of Gaza und Paulus Silentarius: Kunstbeschreibung Justinianischer Zeit* (Leipzig, Berlin, 1912), 135 (cit. Jacoby, *FGrHist* 652 T 2).
22. *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius Tricennial Orations* (Berkeley, 1976). I thank Geoffrey Greatrex, Federico Morelli, Bernhard Palme, and Beth Digeser for their advice.
23. For a recent discussion, E. Amato, "Chorikios: Tradition manuscripte et état de la recherche," in C. Saliou, *Gaza dans l'antiquité tardive*, 93-116. I am following the standard edition: *Choricii Gazaei Opera*, ed. R. Foerster-E. Richtsteig (Leipzig, 1929).
24. The oration has been translated in English only once by F. K. Litsas in his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: F. K. Litsas, "Choricius of Gaza: An Approach to His Work: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1980); translation, 231-234, commentary, 310-314. See also idem, "Choricius of Gaza and His Description of Festivals at Gaza," *JÖB* 32/3 (1982): 427-436.
25. On Athens see E. Watts, "Justinian, Malalas, and the End of Athenian Philosophical Teaching in A.D. 529," *JRS* 94 (2004): 168-182; on Philae see J.H.F. Dijstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion: A Regional Study of Religious Transformation (298-642)* (Leuven: Peeters, 2008). The two historians consider these attempts less conclusive than previous scholarship has suggested.
26. See further, Summus, *PLRE* II, 1038-1039, and Iulianus 8, *PLRE* III A, 731-732.
27. J. R. Crawford, *De Bruma et Brumalibus Festis*, *Bt* 23 (1920), 365-396; F. Perpillou-Thomas, "Les Brumalia d'Apion II," *Tyche* 8 (1993): 107-109; R. Mazza, "Dalla Bruma ai Brumalia: Modelli di cristianizzazione tra Roma e Costantinopoli," in A. Saggioro, ed., *Diritto romano e identità cristiana: Definizioni storico-religiose e confronti interdisciplinari* (Rome, 2005), 161-171; A.-M. Bernardi, "Regards croisés sur les origines de Rome: La fête des Brumalia chez Jean Malalas et Jean Lydos," in J. Beaucamp et al., eds., *Recherches sur la Chronique de Jean Malalas* (Paris, 2006), 53-68. See also W. Pax, "*Brumalia*," in *RAC* II: 646–649, and F. R. Trombley, "*Brumalia*," in *ODB* I: 327-328.
28. For the text with some corrections see Mazza, "Dalla Bruma ai Brumalia," 170 and 176-177, n. 37.
29. *Anthologie Grecque: Première partie: Anthologie Palatine*, vol. 8 (Livre IX, épigr. 359-827), texte établie et traduit par P. Waltz et G. Soury (Paris, 1974), n. 580, 8.
30. *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum Libri Quinque*, ed. R. Keydell, *CFHB* (Berlin, 1967), 5.4.3.
31. Mazza, "Dalla Bruma ai Brumalia," 172.
32. On this phenomenon, see P. Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque: Sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique* (Paris, 1976), 390-393.
33. Malalas has just explained how the two twins were abandoned and found by a country woman. The entire chapter 8 is an attempt to interweave the history

of Rome's origin with contemporary festivals and games; see for instance par. 5 on chariot races and circus factions.

34. Jo.Mal. *Chron.*, VII, 7 (ed. *CFHB* XXXV); English translation by E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, R. Scott et al., *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, Byzantine Australiensia 4 (Melbourne, 1986), 95-96.
35. See M. Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past: Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian* (London, 1992), 64-66.
36. *P. Oxy.* XXVII, 2480, 37-40 (565/566), see also PSI VIII, 953 (567/568). My translation. The *diploun*, literally "double measure," was a standard measure for liquids. Its precise capacity may vary: see T. M. Hickey, "A 'Public' House but Closed: Fiscal Participation and Economic Decision Making on the Oxyrhynchite Estates of the Flavii Apiones" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 291-292.
37. On the family see R. Mazza, *L'Archivio degli Apioni: Terra, lavoro, e proprietà senatoria nell'Egitto tardoantico* (Bari, 2001), 47-74, and Mazza, "Noterelle prosopografiche in margine ad alcune pubblicazioni recenti riguardanti gli Apioni," *Simblos* 4 (2004): 263-280, with previous bibliography.
38. Zuckermann has recently pointed out that Procopius' passage demonstrates a decline of the *limes*, since the area is described as unproductive and deserted; see C. Zuckermann, "L'Armée," in C. Morrisson, ed., *Le Monde Byzantin*, *I: L'Empire romain d'Orient (330-641)* (Paris, 2004), 160. On the Strata's episode see also I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, I.1: *Political and Military History* (Washington D.C., 1995), 209-218; G. Greatrex and S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars: Part II AD 363–630: A Narrative Sourcebook* (London, 2002), 102-104; B. Dignas and E. Winter, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity: Neighbours and Rivals* (Cambridge, 2007), 169-172; originally published in German as *Rom und das Perserreich: Zwei Weltmächte zwischen Konfrontation und Koexistenz, Studienbücher Geschichte und Kultur der Alten Welt* (Berlin, 2001).
39. English translation from Procopius, *History of the Wars*, *Books I-II*, trans. H. B. Dewing (Cambridge, MA, 1914), 263.
40. See Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, 144-145, with other sources. G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War 502-532* (Leeds, 1998), 240, dates the embassy to 530/531 and gives general chronology.
41. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, 209-210; Dignas and Winter, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity*, 171-172, date it to 540; to 539 for Greatrex and Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier*, 102.
42. On the episode see H. Börm, *Prokop und die Perser: Untersuchungen zu den römisch-sasanidischen Kontakten in der ausgehenden Spätantike* (Stuttgart, 2007), 237.
43. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, 214-215.
44. *Or.* IV, see Greek text in *Choricii Gazaei Opera*, 69-81; English translation in Litsas, "Choricius of Gaza: An Approach to His Work," 176-186.
45. On this earthquake, see E. Guidoboni, A. Comastri, and G. Traina, *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes in the Mediterranean Area up to the Tenth Century* (Rome, 1994), 323-325, with a list of sources that does not include Choricius.
46. I am following A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985), 84-112.

47. Greek text: E. Schwartz, ed., *Kyrillos von Skythopolis* (Leipzig, 1939); I am following Festugière's translation: A. J. Festugière, *Les Moines d'Orient* III/2: *Les Moines de Palestine. Cyrille de Scythopolis.Vie de Saint Sabas* (Paris, 1962). For an English translation see R. M. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis: The Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, Cistercian Studies 114 (Kalamazoo, 1991).
48. On the event and its chronology, see D. C. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Empire* (Aldershot, 2004), 259-261.
49. For instance, the career of Strategius II or the combination of the charges of *stratelates* and *pagarchos* registered in papyri coming from the Fayum, Mazza, *L'archivio degli Apioni*, 47-74. In the Fayum *stratelates* seems to be honorific: see. B. Palme in CPR XXIV, Exkursus V 178, n. 2.
50. A. M. Rabello, *Giustiniano, Ebrei, e Samaritani alla luce delle fonti storico-letterarie, ecclesiastiche e giuridiche* (Milan, 1987), 403-449.
51. On the role of authorities in building activities, see L. di Segni, "The Involvement of Local, Municipal, and Provincial Authorities in Urban Building in Late Antique Palestine and Arabia," in J. H. Humphrey, *The Roman and Byzantine Near East: Some Recent Archaeological Research*, JRA supp. ser. no. 14 (Ann Arbor, 1995), 312-332.
52. On *duces* in this area, see G. Greatrex, "Dukes of the Eastern Frontier," in J. Drinkwater and B. Salway, eds., *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected* (London, 2007), 87-98, with previous bibliography.
53. Standard references on this are: A. Demandt, "*Magister Militum*," *RE* Suppl. 12 (1970): 553-790; J. Durliat, "*Magister militum–stratelates* dans l'empire Byzantine (VIe-VIIe siècles)," *BZ* 72 (1979): 306-320.
54. On the career of Athanasios, see now F. Morelli, "Zwischen Poesie und Geschichte: die 'Flagornerie' des Dioskoros und der Dreifache *Dux* Athanasios," in J.-L. Fournet, ed., *Les archives de Dioscore d'Aphrodité cent ans après leur découverte: Histoire et culture dans l'Egypte byzantine, Actes du Colloque, Strasbourg 8-10 décembre 2005* (Paris, 2008), 223-245.
55. On honorary *stratelatai* in inscriptions from Palestine, see di Segni, "The Involvement of Local, Municipal and Provincial Authorities," esp. 313-314.
56. On the late antique army, see most recently: M. Whitby, "The Army, c. 420-620," in *CAH XIV Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, A.D. 425-600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), 288-314; Y. Le Bohec, *L'armée romaine sous le Bas-Empire* (Paris, 2006); Zuckermann, "L'Armée."
57. M. Sartre, *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine* (Brussels, 1982), 108-111.
58. Sartre's interpretation is slightly different. He thinks that Justinian in his *proemium* was describing the situation before Anastasius and Paullus were exercising the role. He sees the double charge given to them as a first attempt made by the emperor to solve the problem of appointing two men of high rank and reputation. In my opinion, Sartre did not pay enough attention to the last lines of the prologue, where it clearly states that the civil duties were performed by the *dux* for a while: "And so it has been a long time since it [the civil power, the office of governor] even ceased, and the duties of the civil power have been performed by the military power [i.e., the dux] without being able to accomplish either his own or the duties of the other; in fact he

has been engaged not in looking after the welfare of the subjects, but in profiting out of both [offices]" (my translation).

59. In light of this prologue, the evaluation of Summus' performance in Arabia is very different from that depicted in Choricius' encomium. Both sources are highly rhetorical and need to be analyzed in the wider frame of Justinian's policy in the provinces. This is not the place to go into depth on the topic; for a recent—but questionable—view see P. Sarris, *Economy and Society in the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2006), on which see my review in *Journal of Agrarian Change* 8 (2008): 150-156.
60. On the Novel see P. Mayerson, "Justinian's Novel 103 and the Reorganization of Palestine," *BASOR* 269 (1988): 65-71.
61. English translation by S. P. Scott, *The Civil Law*, XVII (Cincinnati, 1932).
62. I am following Jo. Mal. *Chron.*, XVIII, 35 (ed. CFHB XXXV), which includes also the excerpta from Malalas in Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De insidiis*.
63. Rabello, *Giustiniano, Ebrei e Samaritani*, 417-419.
64. On Stephanus, see K. G. Holum, "Flavius Stephanus, Proconsul of Palestine," *ZPE* 63 (1986): 231-239; G. Greatrex, "Stephanus, the Father of Procopius of Cesarea," *Medieval Prosopography* 17/1 (1996): 125-145.
65. *B.P.* I, XII, 22; I, XV, 31; VI, XIII, 17.
66. Choricius refers to Hom. *Od.* IV, 69-65.
67. Hom. *Il.* XI, 219-220, referred to Agamemnon.
68. Hes. *Th.* 85.
69. I am following Litsas' interpretation. Choricius is developing the idea that the name Ioustinianos was longer than other names beginning with iota such as Ioannes, Ioustinos, Isakios, etc.
70. The letter theta, the first letter of Theodora's Greek name, precedes iota in the Greek alphabet. This becomes a motive for Choricius to introduce the theme of the harmony of the imperial couple.
71. This is probably a reference to Arab raids, which frequently occurred on the frontiers; see Rabello, *Giustiniano, Ebrei, e Samaritani*, 254.
72. With this expression Choricius means the usual rhetorical devices, which he was not able to display because the oration was impromptu.

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PART IV

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TO SACRED TEXTS AND RITES

9

ORIGEN ON THE *LIMES*: RHETORIC AND THE POLARIZATION OF IDENTITY IN THE LATE THIRD CENTURY

Elizabeth DePalma Digeser

From *In Praise of Constantine* to *Constantine and the Bishops*, one of H. A. Drake's signal observations is that differences in "pagan" and Christian doctrine seldom explain how Rome became a Christian state. Drake's reading of fourth-century rhetoric shows that Constantine's Christianity made room for Hellene elites whose support the emperor needed, especially after he defeated his eastern co-emperor Licinius, who enjoyed Hellene support.[1] The Hellenes whom Constantine accommodated venerated a supreme god, saw the sun (whom many Christians associated with Christ) as a mediator to this God, eschewed blood sacrifice, and believed that asceticism helped the soul return to its source.[2] In short, Drake drew attention to an early fourth-century consensus between pagan and Christian elites. While subsequent scholars have explored the political utility of this consensus,[3] this chapter builds on Drake's work by arguing that doctrine alone is also unhelpful for understanding factors leading to the Great Persecution. Indeed, a doctrinal consensus linked many Hellenes and philosophically oriented Christians long before Constantine. Because this consensus included Hellenes who agitated for persecution and Platonist Christians who pushed back, reasons other than doctrine must explain the strong assertions of boundaries and identities implicated in this religious crisis.[4]

A liminal, hybrid figure whose shadow looms over the third and early fourth century, Origen of Alexandria holds the key to understanding both this third-century consensus and the pressures contributing to the Great

Persecution. Scholars have not recognized Origen's significance in this regard because they have long misread a rhetorical exchange between Eusebius of Caesarea and Porphyry of Tyre. In their efforts to define Origen, these two antagonists, both indebted to his teaching, painted such distorted portraits of the ancient theologian that many modern historians, assuming that doctrine determined group allegiance, concluded wrongly that two Origens existed simultaneously, a Platonist Hellene and a Christian theologian.

This study begins by affirming and amplifying Thomas Böhm's recent proof that there was one Origen, not two. This demonstration not only counters Mark Edwards' recent arguments for two Origens,[5] but it also illustrates that Origen flourished in what anthropologists call an "interaction sphere," an environment in which otherwise disparate cultural groups share an overarching consensus regarding certain "grand traditions."[6] These areas of agreement—for example, a triune monotheism—help explain, I suggest, the relative ease with which many Roman elites were able to accept Constantine's rule. Finally, I briefly revisit Porphyry's and Eusebius' rhetorical characterizations of Origen. Porphyry's negative characterization of Origen's hybridity, resulted from the continued flourishing of the interaction sphere that had produced Origen and many others. Heightened competition, I submit, drove Porphyry to emphasize long-elided doctrinal differences and delineate two competing religious identities.[7] Significantly for a campaign that contributed to the persecution,[8] Porphyry's efforts to rally support for his "Hellenes" did not pit traditional polytheism against Christian monotheism, but opposed two different conceptions of monotheism. Constantine succeeded because he discerned how to regain the interaction sphere's consensus after the persecution failed.

Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* preserves the rhetorical exchange that is the key source for this study. In book 6 Eusebius discusses Origen's life and teaching at length. At chapter 19 he refers to Porphyry's "third book" against Christians, both to condemn his criticisms of Origen but also to use him as evidence for the theologians' stature as a philosopher. In particular, Eusebius wants to justify Origen's training in "worldly and philosophical studies" (6.18.19). He says:

> 6.19.1 [A]mong the Hellenes, witnesses of [Origen's] right action regarding these philosophical activities are the philosophers who flourished in his time, in whose treatises we have found frequent mention of the man, sometimes dedicating their *logoi* to him, at other times bringing their own efforts to him as to a teacher or master. (2) Why is it necessary to say these things? Even Porphyry, having

settled in our time in Sicily, having begun treatises against us, and having tried therein to discredit the Holy Scriptures or set them at variance, mentioned those who interpreted them. Not having been able to bring one minor complaint in criticism against our doctrines . . . he takes to reproaching and denigrating their exegetes, of whom his special target is Origen. (3) Having said that he knew him during his youth, he tries to malign him. But . . . he unintentionally recommends the man, asserting things truthfully when it was impossible for him to do otherwise, but also portraying things falsely in those cases where he believed he could escape notice, sometimes denouncing [Origen] as a Christian, at other times describing his contribution to philosophical learning. (4) But hear then the things that [Porphyry] says in his own words:

In fact, some, having been eager to find deliverance from the bad condition of the Jewish writings (but not by distancing themselves from them), took up exegeses incompatible with and unfit for the things written. Rather than defending their use of what was foreign, these exegeses simply endorsed and praised what was valued by their own communities [*oikeiois*]. For having boasted that things declared openly by Moses are enigmas and conjuring them as oracular sayings full of hidden mysteries, they advance their exegeses, having bewitched the critical faculty of the soul. . . . (5) This kind of logical absurdity derives from a man whom I fell in with while I was still quite young. Very highly esteemed and still popular on account of the treatises he left behind, Origen became very famous among the teachers of this type of argument. (6) For he was a student [*akroatês*] of Ammonius, the man who made the greatest contribution to philosophy in our time. Considering the magnitude of his experience in *logoi*, Origen did profit from his teacher; all the same, considering the [in]correctness of his choice of lifestyle [*bios*], he conceived for himself the opposite course to Ammonius. (7) For Ammonius, a Christian, was brought up in Christian ways by his parents. But when he attached himself to thinking of philosophy, he turned himself without reserve toward his *politeia* [to live] according to its laws. Origen, conversely, a Hellene, educated in the *logoi* of the Hellenes, drove headlong into shameless foreign [*barbaros*] activities. Indeed, applying himself to this, he even offered his skill in *logoi* for sale, living like a Christian and lawlessly in lifestyle, but Hellenizing in his opinions about things as they are [*pragmata*] and about God, even bringing [opinions] of the Hellenes into foreign myths. (8) For attending always to Plato, he was acquainted with the treatises of Numenius, Cronius, and Apollophanes, as well as Longinus and

> Moderatus, and even the men held in high regard among the Pythagoreans. But he also used the books of Chairemon the Stoic and Cornutus; having learned from them the method concerning the symbolic interpretation of the mysteries among the Hellenes, he applied it to the Jewish Scriptures.
>
> These things were questioned by Porphyry in the third treatise of his writings against Christians.

In 1659 Henri de Valois, in his commentary to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, was the first to use this passage to distinguish between a so-called Platonist Origen and an eponymous Christian theologian.[9] Valois followed Porphyry in granting that Origen Adamantius, as he called the Christian, had been Ammonius' student. Assuming that Eusebius' history drew a portrait of a different man from the Origen described by Hellene Platonists, Valois claimed that "there was at that same time *another* Origen, a fellow student of Plotinus and Erennius," who is discussed by "Porphyry in the *Vita Plotini*, Longinus in *De fine*, Eunapius, and Hierocles in *De providentia*."[10] Valois thus asserted the existence of two Origens without determining whether any discernable doctrinal differences distinguished "their" ideas. Valois' distinction between a "pagan" and a Christian Origen so readily conformed to the adversarial relationship between "paganism" and Christianity constructed in the rhetorical exchange between Porphyry and Eusebius that most subsequent historians simply accepted Valois' assumption.[11]

Nevertheless, the "Platonist" Origen is a mirage, as a growing number of scholars now realize.[12] The most compelling evidence for their unity is that the doctrines attributed to the Platonist wholly agree with the extant texts of the Christian theologian. Thomas Böhm recently demonstrated this accord, but even scholars who have striven hardest to distinguish two Origens have conceded this point (see the appendix for Böhm's proof).[13] The accord in Origen's doctrines is the starting point for showing that one Origen was known to both Christian and Platonist circles. As Böhm observes, an identity of the two *personae* can be posited if the data regarding their lifetimes, venues, number of writings and their period of composition can be harmonized.[14] This conclusion has such important ramifications that it is worth reviewing the evidence for the claim.

The first objection often made against identifying the "Christian" with the "Platonist" Origen is that Eusebius (*HE* 7.1.1) sets the theologian's death after the accession of Gallus (251), whereas Porphyry (*VPlot.* 3.3.30) claims that the philosopher Origen wrote the tract *That the King Is the Only Creator* during Gallienus' reign (253-268). Accordingly, Weber and others concluded that the theologian had died under Gallus, the philosopher

under Gallienus.[15] Yet Eusebius' text is inconsistent, and he has clearly erred.[16] Origen was born no earlier than 185, since Eusebius (*HE* 6.2.2, 12) says he was sixteen when his father was martyred in the tenth year of Septimius Severus' reign (that is, in 202/203).[17] Eusebius also says that Origen died at 68 (*HE* 7.1.1), so no earlier than 254—a year into Gallienus' reign—or as late as 256.[18] Perhaps Eusebius or his source mistook the name Gallus for Gallienus.[19] Eusebius—who has just cast Origen as suffering egregiously during Decius' persecution (*HE* 6.39.5)—may also imply for apologetic reasons in 7.1 that Origen died soon after, that is, "after Gallus" (technically true) instead of the more precise "under Gallienus."[20] At any rate, evidence in Eusebius' text indicates that the theologian lived long enough to have written his last work under the later emperor.

The next cluster of problems concerns venue. First, according to Porphyry, Origen (the "philosopher") vowed with Erennius (otherwise unknown) and Plotinus to keep Ammonius' teachings secret (*VPlot.* 3.24-25). Most have assumed that this pact was made after Ammonius' death (so after 243)[21] and that it presupposed close contact and a sustained relationship among the three.[22] Yet Eusebius says that Origen left Alexandria by 232 (*HE* 6.26.1),[23] after the city's bishop, Demetrius, had convened a synod denouncing Origen's self-castration and election to the priesthood in Caesarea (*HE* 6.8.4-5). Despite Eusebius' reticence, Origen's letter to some Alexandrians (ap. Hier. *Contra Ruf.* 2.18) indicates that Demetrius—or the synod—also challenged some of his teachings. Except those in Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Achaea, all eastern churches endorsed the synod's condemnation of Origen.[24] From Eusebius' account, Dörrie and Weber assumed that Origen, banished from Alexandria by 232—just as Plotinus joined Ammonius' circle—never returned to the city and so could not have had the relationship with Plotinus that this agreement seemed to presuppose.[25] This assumption wrongly posits, however, that bishops could enforce their decrees without the state's muscle and that Eusebius would mention Origen's violating his bishop's decree—hardly likely, especially if the theologian unsuccessfully appealed for readmission to the Alexandrian community. Moreover, Theodoret of Cyrrus claims that Plotinus studied with Origen (*Therap.* 6.60), presumably before joining up with Ammonius. And Gennadius, Justinian, and Photius suggest that Origen returned to Alexandria to petition Heraclas, Demetrius' successor, who had maintained the campaign against the theologian's doctrines.[26] Since Heraclas was a former student, Origen might have hoped to change the bishop's mind.[27] This information is also not in Eusebius' interest to include. Since Plotinus was Ammonius' student from 232 to 243, he and Origen could have met

during this time (if they had not done so before) and agreed to keep the master's teachings secret.[28]

The second problem related to venue is that Origen, the alleged philosopher, visited Plotinus' seminar in Rome, whereas the theologian is not thought to have visited the capital so late in his life.[29] This visit would have occurred between Plotinus' arrival (summer 244) and Origen's death (c. 254).[30] Porphyry, who does not claim to be an eyewitness, records Origen's visit to Plotinus' schoolroom and Plotinus' consternation[31]—probably because he was teaching his interpretation of Ammonius' "secret doctrines."[32] Again Eusebius' silence here is not an argument against the theologian's visit:[33] Origen wanted keenly to return to Alexandria, and Eusebius mentions that he had written to the emperor Philip, to the empress Marcia Otacilia Severa, and to Fabianus the bishop of Rome (*HE* 6.36.3), letters that would date between 244 and 248, if written as a group.[34] Having unsuccessfully appealed to Heraclas for readmission to the Alexandrian community, Origen may have wanted their help persuading his bishop, following up his written appeal with a visit to Rome between 244 (Philip's accession) and the emperor's death in 249 (or 248, if the empress died in this year).[35] The latest date would be 250, when Fabian died in Decius' persecution—although this event probably interrupted Origen's quest.[36] Having failed in his quest for reinstatement, Origen would have returned to Caesarea by 250 and Decius' persecution. Problems with Theoctistus, the bishop of Caesarea, again, against Eusebius' interest to report,[37] may have driven Origen onward to Tyre, where, according to some accounts, he died (Phot. *Bibl.* 118). In this interval before Origen's death about 254 Porphyry would have met the theologian, either in Caesarea or in Tyre, the philosopher's home town.[38]

The final apparent obstacle in reuniting the Platonist with the Christian Origen is that Hellene sources attribute only two works to him, but the theologian is credited with many works of Christian theology. The problem begins with Longinus. In a passage of *Peri telous*, preserved in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* (20), Longinus lists Origen among those Platonists who, for the most part, did not "set down their doctrines in writing," but saw their role as "lead[ing] the members of their school to an understanding of what they held." He knows this about Origen because he "studied regularly" with him (and Ammonius) "for a very long time." Despite categorizing some Platonists as prolific authors and others as primarily focused on teaching, however, Longinus concedes that a few teaching philosophers "did write something, for instance Origen, *Peri tôn daimonôn*."[39] After Longinus' death, Porphyry's description of Origen's publications in the *Life of Plotinus* seems only to confirm a meager output. After describing the compact that Origen had made not to reveal

Ammonius' doctrines, Porphyry notes that Origen subsequently broke his oath (after Erennius), but wrote nothing except the treatise "On Daemones" and, in the reign of Gallienus (253 or later), *That the King Is the Only Creator*.[40] This thin record must perplex anyone familiar with the list of the theologian's works.[41]

Porphyry and Longinus, however, describe Origen's output against specific criteria. Longinus' concern is with the publications of men who taught the works of Plato or Aristotle. Longinus' interest is evident from his listing Ammonius twice, describing him first as a teacher of Plato and next as a teacher of Aristotle. Just as Longinus did not list here a treatise by Ammonius on the agreement between Moses and Jesus,[42] he would not have been concerned with works that Origen wrote for other reasons. Indeed, none of Origen's extant theological works elucidate Plato's teaching; they explicate the meaning of Scripture.[43] Longinus, accordingly, mentions only one treatise by Origen that devoted itself to Plato's philosophy, namely "On Daemones." His failure to mention "That the King Is the Only Maker"' suggests that it was sent just to Plotinus' circle or that he was not drawing up an inclusive list.[44] Porphyry's discussion of Origen's output is equally idiosyncratic, concerned only with treatises revealing Ammonius' doctrines. By this criterion, Origen wrote two works, "On Daemones," known to Longinus, and the later work, "That the King Is the Only Maker."

According to Eusebius, Origen schooled his best students in philosophy to prepare for an elevated form of scriptural exegesis (*HE* 6.3.8),[45] a method confirmed in Gregory Thaumaturgus' oration of praise (*Or.* 1, 4) and in a letter that Origen wrote to Gregory.[46] None of these sources say, however, that Origen wrote treatises for his students that would facilitate their philosophical education: Philosophy was an important preparatory subject for gifted students, but merely a key to scriptural exegesis.[47] Given this emphasis, it is not surprising that Origen wrote hardly anything useful for studying Plato, much less so that he failed to set out a philosophical system—or what would count as such for Longinus.[48] Nor is it surprising that such Platonic treatises as he did write would have been overlooked or actively ignored by Christians writing about him. Such texts might have fallen outside Christian authors' areas of interest, or they may have been deliberately suppressed by Origen's followers (for example, Eusebius) after a controversy over the philosophical character of the theologian's teaching broke in the late third century. In the end, the difference in the number of works assigned to Origen from Hellene and Christian sources cannot be used to sever one side of Origen from the other.

Even though the evidence for chronology, venue and works can be reconciled to support the existence of only one Origen, scholars have still been quick to argue for two Origens because Porphyry's description of him jars with our expectations—assumptions derived from a historiographical tradition dividing Hellenes and Christians into mutually exclusive groups. We don't expect Longinus, the scholarly critic, to be full of praise for a Christian theologian.[49] We do not expect a Christian theologian to show up at Plotinus' seminar. We don't expect that a Christian theologian's teaching might interest a Platonist philosopher such as Porphyry. And yet to argue for two Origens is to imply that Porphyry is badly mistaken about Origen's identity, a man who was not only the focal point of his attack in this third treatise against Christians but also a man whom he knew and with whom he apparently studied in his youth.[50] To argue for two Origens is to believe that Eusebius accepted this error of Porphyry without question, when he and his mentor, Pamphilus, had devoted themselves to writing a six-book defense of the theologian whose heritage they claimed. Eusebius is a difficult source whose agenda shapes his works. But to think that he and Porphyry could each make such an error—when Porphyry at least was describing a contemporary—is poor historical judgment.

Once we conceive that Origen traveled in two circles, that he lived in a borderlands region where philosophers and Christian exegetes intermingled, we see that a letter he wrote defending his Greek education confirms this interpretation (ap. Eus. *HE* 6.19.12). "But since I was devoted to lecturing, and the fame of our proficiency was spreading abroad," he remarks, "there approached me sometimes heretics, sometimes those involved in the Hellenes' mathematical sciences—especially those involved in philosophy, and I thought it right to examine both the opinions of the heretics and also the claims that the philosophers make to speak concerning truth."[51] In other words, as a Christian teacher in Alexandria, Origen was attracting students with backgrounds for which he felt under-prepared: Christians outside of what he considered mainstream (perhaps Gnostics) and students interested in studying Greek philosophy. This latter group need not have been wholly or even mostly Christian. In order to be a more effective teacher for these students, Origen asserts, he felt that he had to familiarize himself not only with the teachings of the "heretics" but also with philosophers' claims for the truth of their doctrines. To accomplish this goal, Origen, like Heraclas before him, went to study "with the teacher of philosophy"—that is, Ammonius Saccas. That this activity was not completely outside the norms even of Alexandria's Christian community—even the episcopacy—is clear from the way Origen justifies his activities by citing Bishop Heraclas' example.

Since studying philosophy was something that Origen felt he did have to justify, however, the students of philosophy whom his lectures were attracting were probably not all Christian. Or his defensive tone may stem from his association with the Christian Ammonius, who was certainly heterodox (as Origen's own letter acknowledges).[52] Accordingly, this letter is proof for an Alexandrian educational system in which some Hellenes and some Christians studied philosophy together regardless of the religious affiliation of their teacher. In other words, Alexandria's intellectual life, at least in the mid third-century, was not characterized by sharply circumscribed camps of Christians and Hellenes; rather it was a liminal area in which both intermingled relatively freely.

Drawing on Joseph R. Caldwell's work with native peoples along the eastern U.S. seaboard, I suggest that Origen's Alexandria was an "'interaction sphere,"[53] in that "a number of distinct societies and separate cultures" had come into contact with one another.[54] In Caldwell's observations, coming into contact, even for very disparate cultures, sometimes facilitates a period of tremendous innovation, especially in the religious sphere, which may result in exactly similar practices being expressed across several societies. Caldwell calls these overarching cultural commonalities "Great Traditions" to distinguish them from the variety of "little traditions" expressed by the cultures thus bound together.[55] Although Alexandria from its founding was famous as a home to many different Mediterranean peoples, in the early third century these connections appear to have been particularly close and fruitful. In particular, the "Grand Tradition" that emerged among at least the Hellene and Christian groups with which we are concerned here was a shared conception of monotheism. In its simplest terms, it posited a triune monotheism that embraced an utterly transcendent element, an intelligible element, and a third element that was somehow involved in the mediation between human and divine realms. Origen, Plotinus, Porphyry and Eusebius shared this conception of divinity, which results from combining Aristotelian, Platonist, and Pythagorean principles; many of their respective students shared it as well, as did Ammonius, their common source. This conception, I suspect, was at the core of Constantine's own consensus,[56] and it was an innovative product of people meeting in the interstices, the borderlands, between Alexandria's Christian and Hellene cultures.

However fruitful the interaction sphere of Origen's Alexandria, it was a source of anxiety to his heirs, Porphyry and Eusebius. Traffic in this liminal area probably accelerated after Gallienus instituted the "Little Peace of the Church" (Eus. *HE* 7.13), making it increasingly difficult to identify where people's allegiances lay within the educational system. For a

Hellene such as Porphyry, concerned that Ammonius' legacy—as carried forward by Plotinus—be preserved unadulterated, and for a Christian such as Eusebius, concerned about Christian accommodation to Roman cult in the early years of the Great Persecution, the liminal area in which Origen lived and worked needed to be remapped in black and white. As Frederik Barth suggests in his studies of identity and ethnicity, in an unstable situation "where two or more interspersed groups are . . . in at least partial competition within the same niche," anthropologists often see identities defined and asserted in response.[57] This is the context in which Porphyry's statements about Origen's conflicting lifestyles and Eusebius' rejoinder must be read. Porphyry claims that Origen, "a Hellene, educated in the *logoi* of the Hellenes, drifted into shameless foreign activities . . . living like a Christian and lawlessly in lifestyle, but Hellenizing in his opinions" (ap. Eus. *HE* 6.19.7). Eusebius retorts that Porphyry "plainly lies (for what won't an antagonist of Christians do?) when he says that [Origen] changed sides from the Hellenes." For, Eusebius counters, "Origen learned the doctrine of Christ from his parents" (*HE* 6.19.9-10). Although many scholars used this exchange to argue that Eusebius and Porphyry were talking about two different men, this mistaken reading forgets that Porphyry and Eusebius are categorizing the activities of a man a generation older than they are who might not have used the same descriptive categories for himself.

Origen's activities could be viewed in different ways by people from different perspectives. Porphyry, for his part, says nothing about the cultic activities of Origen's family.[58] For the Platonist, the marker of the "Hellene" component of Origen's identity is that the man was "educated in the *logoi* of the Hellenes."[59] Unlike Ammonius, with whom Porphyry contrasts Origen directly here, this education was not enough to reorient the man to what the Platonist considers to be his proper, that is, Hellene, *politeia*.[60] Rather, according to Porphyry, Origen continued to transgress the proper boundaries of the Hellene community, as constituted in their laws and rules, and to live like a "lawless" Christian. Porphyry's remarks actually take Origen's Christian family for granted. Accordingly, the contrast Porphyry stakes out between Ammonius and Origen is not between the career of a man who was originally Christian (Ammonius) and one who was originally Hellene (that is, Origen). Rather, Porphyry is contrasting two Christians: the elder used philosophy to reorient his life; the younger one did not—despite the caliber of his education.[61] Whatever Origen's own intentions, Porphyry's current stake in Ammonius' heritage via Plotinus' teaching has driven him to condemn the theologian's behavior. In this view, because Origen continued to straddle two communities, he cannot be a source of true philosophy. Porphyry,

accordingly, draws a boundary around what a Hellene may do and sets a certain category of Origen's activities outside of it.

Eusebius has spun Porphyry's boundary drawing to mean something quite different from what the Platonist intended. For the Christian scholar and future bishop of Caesarea, Porphyry's portrait of Origen as a man with a fine Hellene education who had nevertheless drifted (back) into Christian activities must have unsettled Eusebius' self-conception as Origen's heir, especially since Origen's philosophical perspective was under attack at the cusp of the fourth century.[62] If Origen counted in some respect as a Hellene, what was Eusebius?[63] For this reason, Eusebius reads more into Porphyry than is warranted; this strategy makes it easier for him to accuse Porphyry of lying.[64] Porphyry says that Origen "drifted between" two communities, but Eusebius claims that Porphyry accused Origen of "changing sides," of converting to Christianity from being a Hellene. Since Eusebius has already devoted many lines to sketching Origen's Christian family, his martyred father, and his early zeal for the arena himself, he has skillfully prepared his auditor to question Porphyry's narrative on this point. It is not in Eusebius' interest for Origen to appear to have a foot in both communities—the blurrier Origen's allegiances look, the more questionable the activities of his heirs. Yet Eusebius is walking a tightrope here, for to a certain extent he must embrace Origen's philosophical activity.[65] Eusebius has inherited this legacy, and, besides focusing on Origen's teaching philosophy as a preparation for scriptural exegesis (cf. e.g., *HE* 6.3), the bishop quoted Porphyry to prove Origen's high standing in the philosophical community at large (6.19.1-2).[66] Like Porphyry, Eusebius engages in his own identity definition, and in delineating the character of the ideal Christian (see the hagiography of Origen in book 6), he has inverted Porphyry's model of the ideal Hellene.[67] Remember Porphyry's contrast between Ammonius and Origen: both Christians, but when the elder man learned philosophy he used it to reorient his life toward the Hellene community and the younger man did not. For Eusebius, this fact about Origen is precisely what makes him a Christian—he has always been oriented toward the Christian community. Indeed all of Eusebius' book 6 works toward this goal. For Porphyry, to be a Hellene means living a life with philosophy at its center, as its guiding principle. For Eusebius, a Christian uses philosophy only in service to the Christian community. Both men sketched out these two mutually exclusive ideal types in the biographies, or more properly hagiographies, of their school's founders, Porphyry in the *Life of Plotinus* and Eusebius in book 6 of the *Ecclesiastical History*.[68]

Although the logical possibility exists that two men named Origen studied with Ammonius of Alexandria, that they were both known to

Porphyry, albeit in a fundamentally confused way, and that they both thought that God the Father and King was also the immediate creator of the universe, the absence of any distinction in the ancient sources between two men who allegedly traveled in similar circles ought to lead to the simplest conclusion: that the "two" Origens are actually different sides of the same man. Porphyry's antipathy to Origen as a Christian scholar and the Platonist's desire to separate his group from the Christians' add weight to this conclusion. These circumstances further imply that it was Origen's standing as an heir to Ammonius' teaching that so concerned Porphyry. Accordingly, the criticisms that Porphyry voiced regarding Origen would have been of immediate interest to the small circle of tightly interconnected people, many of whom Porphyry knew directly, all of whom could trace their intellectual formation—to some extent—to Ammonius Saccas. Seven people are known to have studied with Ammonius: Heraclas, the future bishop of Alexandria, Erennius, Origen, Longinus, Olympius, Theodosius, and Plotinus. Origen's students included Longinus, Porphyry, and Gregory Thaumaturgus (among others); Longinus' students included Porphyry;[69] and Plotinus' students included Porphyry. It is no wonder that Porphyry sees himself as the one true heir of Ammonius: having studied with Origen and Longinus, the master's two other teaching heirs, Porphyry is in a unique position to value the way in which Plotinus—and presumably no other—"brought the mind of Ammonius to bear on his teaching." Seeing Plotinus' school as the sole repository of true philosophy means that Porphyry is necessarily concerned about preserving the integrity of that legacy—not just for its own sake, but because he believes that those few philosophers who have touched truth have an obligation to guide the polity toward the right path.[70] Not only Origen's activities but also those of his presumably less-talented followers in veering off the path of the true philosophy have jeopardized the health of the philosophical community and hence the well-being of the political community. This concern, I suggest, motivated Porphyry's further involvement with the political forces lobbying Diocletian in support of the Great Persecution.[71]

APPENDIX

Thomas Böhm argues that the doctrines attributed to Origen in the Platonist sources completely accord with those that the theologian sets out in *De principiis*, *Against Celsus*, and his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Above all, in both sources Origen rejects the idea of a transcendent One or first hypostasis beyond Being or substance.[72] In itself, this correspondence, a hallmark of second-century Platonism, does not demonstrate that both traditions describe the same Origen.[73]

Nevertheless, Böhm finds a distinctive element in both traditions that clinches his argument. First, in his *Commentary on John* (1.38), Origen presents God the Father as intelligible to the second hypostasis, or Son, and as "a self-thinking intelligence" (fr. 13).[74] Origen saw God the Father as the Creator and "the second person of the trinity as the intermediary in Creation," concepts that accord with a work attributed to the Platonist Origen, "That the King Is the Only Creator."[75] To explain this concept of the Father in *De principiis* (1.1.1), Origen draws an analogy between God and the sun: "God is incomprehensible and immeasurable, but just as the sun, is supremely visible.[76] He renders other things visible to the eye. Thus, God, the supreme intelligible, renders his nature, indirectly, to the higher faculties of knowledge."[77] Accordingly, the Father is not transcendent in the same way as for Plotinus or Proclus for whom the One or first hypostasis is completely unknowable and transcends the noetic realm.[78] With respect to his dignity (*presbeia*) and power (*dunamis*), however, the Father *is* transcendent over essence (*ousia*) and intelligibility (*nous*), the two elements that constitute Plotinus' second hypostasis.[79] This conception draws heavily, if implicitly, on Plato's *Republic* (509b) in which the Good is described as "transcend[ing] essence in dignity and surpassing power."[80]

Böhm turns next to Proclus' account of Origen (*Plat. Theol.* 2.4). He first observes how Proclus frames his own account of the One's transcendence, in part, an argument against those who equate the One with Intellect and absolute Being or essence. Among these Platonists, Proclus singles out Origen's views for attack, probably those that he set out in *That the King Is the Only Creator,* a work now known only by its title (Porph. *VPlot.* 3.31).[81] The "King" should probably be identified with the *basileus* in Plato's *Second Epistle*, the "cause of all good things" (312e1-4).[82] According to Proclus, Origen considered the One to be just a name, "without existence" (*anuparkton*) and "without substance" (*Th. Plat.* 2.4).[83] Instead, following Aristotle, Origen set a noetic structure as the first principle, which he identified with essence or *ousia*.[84] Such a claim, Böhm argues, suggests that Origen understands the first principle's transcendence differently than did Plotinus and Proclus, who saw the first principle or One as "beyond every intellect and being" (*Plat. Theol.* 2.4). For Origen, however, the first principle can be transcendent only with respect to its dignity and power.[85] Böhm next observes that, in order to counter the arguments of Platonists like Origen, Proclus turns immediately to the passage from Plato's *Republic* describing the Good as, indeed, transcending essence in dignity and power. Since Proclus is arguing against Origen's view of the first principle and he uses this passage of the *Republic* to do so, Böhm concludes that Origen too used this text to articulate his concept of the Father.

To recap: Origen's *De principiis* and *Commentary on John* draw implicitly on *Rep.* 509b to articulate his notion that the Father is intelligible, to some extent, but also transcendent in power and dignity. Likewise, Proclus' *Platonist Theology* draws explicitly on *Rep.* 509b to argue against Origen's identification of the King (or Father) with *nous*, or Intellect. To wrap up the argument, Böhm turns to Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel* (11.21-22) which explicitly refers to *Rep.* 509b to argue that "the Good itself is nothing else than God," who "far transcends essence in dignity and power." All the same, Eusebius suggests, through quoting Numenius, "mind itself is found to be the good." Here Eusebius not only replicated Origen's conception of the Father but he has also done so by using the text from *Rep.* 509b

to derive the very position that Proclus opposed in Origen.[86] Böhm concludes that the use of *Rep.* 509b in Proclus, Eusebius, and Origen's theological writings proves that the Origen discussed by the Platonists is the same person as the theologian. While it is true, Böhm concedes, that the theological terminology of *De principiis* or the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* is lacking in the Platonist accounts, he attributes this difference solely to the audience for whom Origen was writing.[87]

In arguing that such an accord is to be expected from people who "are near contemporaries, heard the same teacher and esteem Plato," Weber attempted to downplay the significance of this accord.[88] But Böhm has rightly rejected this criticism, observing that Plotinus and the "two Origens" shared the same teacher in Ammonius and yet developed markedly different doctrines.[89]

NOTES

1. Christopher Kelly, "Bureaucracy and Government," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 189.
2. Cf., e.g., H. A. Drake, "Constantine and Consensus," *Church History* 64 (1995): 1-15.
3. Cf., e.g., Noel Lenski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-13.
4. Frederik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 20; Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 11-42.
5. Mark J. Edwards, "Ammonius, Teacher of Origen," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993): 1-13; idem, *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 54-55; idem, *Culture and Philosophy in the Age of Plotinus* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 28.
6. Joseph R. Caldwell, "Interaction Spheres in Prehistory," in *Hopewellian Studies*, ed. Joseph R. Caldwell and Robert L. Hall (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1964), 141, and Robert Redfield, "The Social Organization of Tradition," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15 (1955): 13-21.
7. Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups*, 20.
8. See Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, "Porphyry, Julian, or Hierokles? The Anonymous Hellene in Makarios Magnês' *Apocriticus*," *Journal of Theological Studies* 53 (2002): 466-502, and idem, "Lactantius, Porphyry, and the Debate over Religious Toleration," *JRS* 88 (1998): 129-146.
9. F. H. Kettler, "War Origenes Schüler des Ammonius Sakkas?" in *Épektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. J. Fontaine and C. Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 327; Migne's edition of Eusebius (PL 20) preserves Valois' commentary.
10. Eus. *HE* 6.1-7.1; Porph. *Chr.* ap. Eus. *HE* 6.19; Or. *Ep.* ap. Eus. *HE* 6.19.12-14; Hierocl. *Prov.* ap. Phot. *Bibl.* 214, 251; Porph. *Comm. Tim.* ap. Procl. *Comm.*

*Tim.*at 240d; Long. *De fine* ap. Porph. *VPlot.* 20.35; Porph. *VPlot.* 3.24-33; 14, 21; Eunapius, *VS* s.v. "Porphurios."

11. E.g., J. A. Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Graeca*, vol. 4 (Hamburg: 1723), 97, 160; Eduard Zeller, *Die nacharistotelische philosophie*, 5th ed., 3 vols., vol. 3.2: *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1923), 513 (incl. n. 3) to 519; H. Dörrie, "Ammonios, der Lehrer Plotins," *Hermes* 83 (1955): 440-441, 468-472; K. O. Weber, *Origenes der Neuplatoniker* (Munich: Beck, 1962), 15-40, esp. 34; R. Goulet, "Porphyre, Ammonius, les deux Origène et les autres," *RHPhR* 57 (1977): 471-496, esp. 485-490; A. H. Armstrong, "Plotinus and Christianity," in *Platonism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Stephen Gersh and Charles Kannengiesser (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 116; A. H. Armstrong, "Plotinus and Christianity: With Special Reference to II.9 [33] 9.26-83 and V.8 [31] 4.27-36," *Studia Patristica* 20 (1989): 83; Edwards, "Ammonius," 1-13; O'Meara ap. Origen, *Prayer: Exhortation to Martyrdom*, trans. John J. O'Meara, *Ancient Christian Writers* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1954), 7.
12. E.g., T. Böhm, "Origenes, Theologe und (Neu-)Platoniker? oder: wem soll man misstrauen, Eusebius oder Porphyrius?" *Adamantius* 8 (2002): 7-23; P. F. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement on Origen," in *Origeniana quinta*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 351-367; F. H. Kettler, "Origenes, Ammonius Sakkas, und Porphyrius," in *Kerygma und Logos: Beiträge zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Carl Andresen zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. A. M. Ritter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1979), 322-328; Cadiou, "La jeunesse d'Origène: Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie au début du IIIe siècle," *Etudes de Théologie Historique* 17 (1935): 184f.
13. E.g., Weber, *Origenes*, 30. See also Henning Ziebritzki, *Heiliger Geist und Weltseele: Das Problem der dritten Hypostase bei Origenes, Plotin, und ihren Vorkaufern* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), 37, and H.-J. Vogt, "Origenes," *LThK* 7 (1998): 1135-1136, ap. Böhm, "Origenes," 6. Zeller, *Die nacharistotelische philosophie*, 501 n. 2, is an exception, but never proves that the theologian "does not have the opinions which we find in the Platonists."
14. Böhm, "Origenes," 8.
15. Weber, *Origenes*, 18-20; Zeller, *Die nacharistotelische philosophie*, 501 n. 2; Dörrie, "Ammonios," 471; H. Dörrie, "Ammonios Sakkas," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 2 (1978): 466; Goulet, "Les deux Origène," 484.
16. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 358; Böhm, "Origenes," 19.
17. Kettler, "Origenes," 323, Weber, *Origenes*, 18-19, Böhm, "Origenes," 19. Septimius Severus was proclaimed emperor on 9 April 193. Cf. *P. Dur.* 54 (*Feriale Duranum*) col. iii, line 3, ap. T. D. Barnes, "The Chronology of Plotinus' Life," *GRBS* 17 (1976): 67 n. 13.
18. Kettler, "Origenes," 323-324. Böhm, "Origenes," 22. The accession of Gallienus and Valerian "cannot fall long after 29 August 253." Cf. *ILS* 531 (21 Oct 253; Gemellae in southern Numidia) ap. Barnes, "Plotinus' Life," 67 n. 15. Gallienus' regnal dates begin with those of his father Valentinian. I have used Septimius Severus' *dies imperii* to reckon these dates, but the

problems are the same regardless of the chronological system that Eusebius was using, whether this, Egyptian regnal, or Seleucid regnal.

19. Kettler, "Origenes," 324.
20. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 352; R. M. Grant, "Early Alexandrian Christianity," *Church History* 40 (1971): 135.
21. Porphyry says that Plotinus began studying with him at the age of 28 (in 232) and stayed with him for eleven years (i.e., until 243) (*VPlot.* 3.6f; 1). For these dates, see Barnes, "Plotinus' Life,' 65-70.
22. Weber, *Origenes*, 18, 22; Zeller, *Die nacharistotelische philosophie*, 501 n. 2.
23. "In the tenth year of Alexander" whose accession was 13 March 222. Böhm, "Origenes," 20.
24. O. W. Reinmuth, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 4 (1967): 106-109, ap. Grant, "Alexandrian Christianity," 135.
25. Dörrie, "Ammonios Sakkas," 463; Weber, *Origenes*, 18, 20-22; Goulet, "Les deux Origène," 483.
26. Gennadius *De viris inl.* 34; Justinian, *Letter to Mennas* (ACO III 197, 202); Photius, *Interrogationes decem* 9; Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 359, 366; Böhm, "Origenes," 20; P. Nautin, *Origène: Sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 404-405; Joseph W. Trigg, "The Charismatic Intellectual: Origen's Understanding of Religious Leadership," *Church History* 50 (1) (1981): 6. [Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa], "History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria," in *Patrologia Orientalis*, ed. B. Evetts (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1948), 1.9, p. 170. Severus of al-Ushmunain also hints that Origen returned to Alexandria after Demetrius' condemnation.
27. Böhm, "Origenes," 21.
28. Ibid., 21. It is, however, possible that Plotinus was never involved in this pact. See Denis O'Brien, "Plotinus and the Secrets of Ammonius," *Hermathena* 157 (1994): 123-124. If so, then Origen and Erennius could have made the agreement at any time and in any place.
29. Dörrie, "Ammonios," 471; Goulet, "Les deux Origène," 483; Zeller, *Die nacharistotelische philosophie*, 501 n. 2, and Weber, *Origenes*, 22.
30. Barnes, "Plotinus' Life," 65-70; Weber, *Origenes*, 21.
31. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 360, Böhm, "Origenes," 21.
32. O'Brien, "Secrets of Ammonius," 121-122.
33. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 360.
34. Ibid., 360.
35. Ibid., 359.
36. Fabian was bishop from 236 to 250 (Cyp. *Ep.* 9).
37. Böhm, "Origenes," 21.
38. Ibid., 16; Kettler, "Origenes," 324.
39. Trans. Armstrong.
40. Did Origen write this in response to what he had heard in Plotinus' seminar several years before? See Kettler, "Origenes," 326, H. Langerbeck, "The Philosophy of Ammonius Saccas," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77 (1957): 73. He and Plotinus disagreed, not just over the character of the first principle (see appendix) but also regarding the process of creation. Origen may have seen Plotinus as deforming Ammonius' views, since the theologian's thinking

also concurred with that of Longinus (Procl. *In Plat. Theol.* 98). Denis O'Brien, "Origène et Plotin sur le roi de l'univers," in *Sophiês maiêtores/Chercheurs de sagesse. Hommage à Jean Pépin*, ed. Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, Goulven Madec, and Denis O'Brien, *Coll. des Etudes Augustiniennes Sér. Antiquité* (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1992), 329-332; Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 360-362, incl. n. 82.

41. Cf., e.g., Weber, *Origenes*, 23-24; Zeller, *Die nacharistotelische philosophie*, 501 n. 2; Edwards, "Ammonius,"1-13; Maria di Pasquale Barbanti, "Origene di Alessandria e la scuola di Ammonio Sacca," in *HENOSIS KAI PHILIA = Unione e amicizia: Omaggio a Francesco Romano*, ed. Maria Barbanti, Giovanna Rita Giardina, and Paolo Manganaro (Catania: CUECM, 2002), 362-363.
42. Cf. J. E. Bruns, "The Agreement of Moses and Jesus in the *Demonstratio evangelica* of Eusebius," *Vigilae Christianae* 31 (1977): 117-125.
43. Böhm, "Origenes," 22.
44. Longinus clearly wrote his treatise after Porphyry left him for Plotinus (*VPlot.* 20.90), i.e., after 263. O'Brien, "Origène et Plotin," 339.
45. Contra Goulet, "Les deux Origène," 474.
46. Joseph W. Trigg, "God's Marvelous *Oikonomia:* Reflections of Origen's Understanding of Divine and Human Pedagogy in the *Address* Ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (1) (2001): 30; Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen* (London: Routledge, 1998) 13-14, 36-37; Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 354, contra Goulet, "Les deux Origène," 477. While Origen's letter exhorts Gregory to study Scripture(3), it begins by claiming that "the philosophy of the Hellenes" is essential as "a course of preparation" for scriptural exegesis(1).
47. See Origen's letter to Gregory, Or. *Comm. Cant.* prol. 3, and Trigg, "God's *Oikonomia*," 29.
48. Cf. Edwards, "Ammonius," 1-13.
49. E.g., Dörrie, "Ammonios," 472; Zeller, *Die nacharistotelische philosophie*, 501 n. 2.
50. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 352, 354; Böhm, "Origenes," 15; Kettler, "Origenes," 323.
51. Oulton's translation, slightly modified.
52. Kettler, "Origenes," 324 incl. n. 20.
53. Caldwell, "Interactions Spheres," 135-143. Although Caldwell's theory was developed in order to explain cultural commonalities among the prehistoric Hopewell peoples from 100 BCE to 500 CE (137), he raises the possibility that such a concept would be applicable to other times and regions, including the ancient Mediterranean.
54. Ibid., 137.
55. Here he appropriates the language of Redfield, "Social Organization," 13-21; Caldwell, "Interactions Spheres," 141.
56. These nuances can be clearly seen in Eusebius' careful oratory in his *LC,* as discerned by H. A. Drake, ed., *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' 'Tricennial Orations'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).
57. Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups*, 17-20.
58. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 353.

59. Gillian Clark, "'Translate into Greek': Porphyry of Tyre on the New Barbarians," in *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. Richard Miles (London/NYC: Routledge, 1999), 112-132.
60. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 353.
61. G. Fowden, "The Platonist Philosopher and His Circle in Late Antiquity," *Philosophia* 7 (1977): 363.
62. Cf. R. M. Grant, "Eusebius and His Lives of Origen," in *Forma futuri. Studi in onore di Michele Pellegrino* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1975), 629, 639.
63. Ibid., 638.
64. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 353; Grant, "Alexandrian Christianity," 142.
65. Carlo Perelli, "Eusebio e la critica di Porfirio a Origene: L'esegesi cristiana dell'Antico Testamento come metaleptikos tropos," *Annali di Scienzi religiosi* 3 (1998): 234.
66. Ibid., 236.
67. Grant, "Lives of Origen," 639, claims that Eusebius has simply inverted the model of the divine man that Porphyry crafted in his *Life of Pythagoras* (which he knew), but the choice of the *Life of Plotinus* as a model is also a possibility. For Eusebius' knowledge of the *VPyth*., see A. Nauck, *Porphyrii philosophi Platonici opuscula selecta*, 2d ed. (Leipzig: 1886; repr. Hildesheim, 1963), 4-7, 12-14.
68. Beatrice, "Porphyry's Judgement," 363.
69. Although some have questioned whether the Longinus whose books Origen owned was the same man who studied with the Christian exegete and with whom Porphyry studied, it is not surprising that Origen might use the texts of a man twenty years his junior. Indeed for ibid., "Porphyry's Judgement**,"** 355, 357, the presence of Longinus' books in Origen's library (as reported by Porphyry, an eyewitness) clinches the case for a single Origen.
70. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, "Religion, Law, and the Roman Polity: The Era of the Great Persecution," in *Law and Religion in Classical and Christian Rome*, ed. Clifford Ando and Jörg Rüpke (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 68-84.
71. Idem, "Religious Toleration," 129-146.
72. *Princ.* 1.1.6; 1.2.6, 8; 4.4.1, 8, *In Joh.* 1.38, 2.4, 23, 28; 32.28-29; *Cels.* 7.45; Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 2.4; Porph. *VPlot.* 3.31.
73. Kettler, "Origenes," 326 incl. n. 28.
74. R. D. Williams, "The Son's Knowledge of the Father in Origen," in *Origeniana quarta*, ed. L. Lies (Innsbruck, Vienna: 1987), 146-147.
75. Kettler, "Origenes," 326 n. 28.
76. Cf. also Plot. *Enn.* 2.9.4.
77. R. Berchman, "Origen on 'The Categories': A Study in Later Platonic First Principles," in *Origeniana quinta*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Leuven: 1992), 232; Henri Crouzel, "Le Dieu d'Origène et le Dieu du Plotin," in *Origeniana quinta: Historica, text and method, biblica, philosophica, theologica, Origenism and later developments*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Leuven: University Press, 1992), 410.
78. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 2.4; Plot. *Enn.* 6.9.2. See also Berchman, "The Categories," 232; Henri Crouzel, *Origène et Plotin: Comparaisons doctrinales* (Paris: Téqui,

1992), 495; Henri Crouzel, "La connaissance dont jouit Dieu suivant Plotin et suivant Origène," *Studia Patristica* 21 (1989): 285, 296; and Salvatore Lilla, "Neoplatonic Hypostases and Christian Trinity," in *Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition: Essays Presented to John Whittaker*, ed. Mark Joyal (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 143-144.

79. Orig. *In Joh.* 13.21, 25; Berchman, "The Categories," 232; Williams, "Son's Knowledge," 148; Lilla, "Neoplatonic Hypostases," 135, 142. See Plot. *Enn.* 5.1.4, 8; 5.3.5; 5.4.2.
80. See Böhm, "Origenes," 10, and Crouzel, "Le Dieu," 411, 416 n. 57.
81. Böhm, "Origenes," 10-11.
82. O'Brien, "Origène et Plotin," 319, contra Henri de Valois, ed., *Eusebius' Historia ecclesiastica*, vol. 20 (1659), ad. 6.19, Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Graeca*, 97, Mark J. Edwards, "Porphyry's Egyptian: *De abstinentia* II. 47," *Hermes* 123 (1995): 127 n. 11, and Zeller, *Die nacharistotelische philosophie*, 515 n. 1, who translate the title as "The Emperor [or King] Is the Only Poet."
83. O'Brien, "Origène et Plotin," 324.
84. See also ibid., 325.
85. Böhm, "Origenes," 12.
86. Ibid., 13-15.
87. Ibid., 13.
88. Weber, *Origenes*, 30.
89. Cf. also A. H. Armstrong, review of K. O. Weber, *Origenes der Neuplatoniker*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 83 (1963): 184-185. Origen's opinion on Homer in the two traditions is also compatible (contra Dörrie, "Ammonios," 472), for his "lively interest" in and emotional defense of Homer, as reported by Porphyry via Proclus (*In Tim.* 19d), accords with his praise for the Greek author in *Contra Celsum* (4.91; 7.6, 36, as against Homer's moral and religious shortcomings at 4.36; 7.54).

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10

A STRANGE CONSENSUS: DAEMONOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN ORIGEN, PORPHYRY, AND IAMBLICHUS

Heidi Marx-Wolf

In his book *Constantine and the Bishops: the Politics of Intolerance*, Harold A. Drake clearly demonstrates that the conflict model, a model that has informed a great deal of scholarship about "pagan"-Christian relations in the fourth century, has been seriously undermined.[1] This model operates on the assumption that the majority of interactions across religious boundaries were hostile and combative.[2] Concerning the most dramatic episode of conflict in Late Antiquity, Drake writes: "Diocletian's Great Persecution appears more and more an aberration, interrupting almost half a century of peaceful coexistence between pagans and Christians. Its most important effect was not to polarize pagans and Christians but to discredit coercion as a viable means for settling religious differences."[3] The primary aim of Drake's book is to explain how the overall atmosphere of "peaceful coexistence" changed to one of intolerance. This intolerance not only came to characterize relations between Christians and non-Christians but also relations between different Christian groups. While Drake's argument focuses on the early fourth century, this contribution looks at discussions between Christian intellectuals and Hellenes in the third century, and in particular, the exchanges between Origen, Porphyry, and Iamblichus on the nature and status of daemons. All three thinkers were engaged in a similar project, namely, they all attempted to provide a rationale for traditional Greek and Roman cult, its divinities and spirits, and the efficacy of its miracles, healings, and oracles. All three were also concerned with clearly delineating orders of spiritual

beings, their origin, nature, and status within the cosmos. And finally, for all three, their daemonological discourse interwove concerns about the nature and order of spirits with soteriological considerations, that is, concerns about the salvation of the soul and its return to its origin. It is not surprising that intellectuals who shared similar, even the same social and educational milieus, should share a similar conceptual framework and set of guiding concerns. Yet one frequently finds scholars of this period operating on the assumption that Christian and non-Christian thinkers inhabited distinct intellectual spheres and that their infrequent interactions were almost universally characterized by hostility and fundamental disagreement. By arguing for a common conceptual framework for Origen, Porphyry, and Iamblichus as well as a shared social and cultural milieu, I suggest that the conflict model is also compromised for the pre-Constantinian period, making persecution even less "natural" than has often been assumed.

By suspending the assumption that the majority of interactions between traditional Greco-Romans and Christians were polemical, hostile, or violent, important moments of shared understanding and agreement between self-identifying members of these groups emerge as well as moments of ambiguity in the process of identity formation itself. One strange and potent point of agreement is daemonology. Such agreement may have existed even while Christians and pagan philosophers contested with each other at certain crucial junctures both in texts and in the world. In sharing assumptions about divinity and its inverse, Christian theologians and Hellene philosophers may have sought points of distinction dramatic enough to reinforce and circumscribe their separate identities. Earnest study of these points of shared conceptual categories, however, relocates actual points of difference, namely, ones identified by the third-century intellectuals under investigation.

Although recent scholarship on "pagan" monotheism has increasingly documented similarities between philosophers and Christian intellectuals on the question of divinity, few studies have considered their views of intermediate spiritual beings and evil daemons.[4] Nevertheless, comparative study of late antique daemonology yields important new insights that comparative studies on monotheisms in this period have not attended to. My contribution will demonstrate both the existence of shared understandings about evil daemons across religious boundaries and the importance of internecine debates in shaping daemonological discourse among Platonists. As we will see, internecine debates and conflicts were often more significant factors in the positions individual thinkers took than their extramural disagreements. This has been amply demonstrated in the case of later Christian internecine conflicts, but the assumption often

persists that because so-called pagans were polytheists, they were more tolerant and unified. But scholars who work on late Platonist philosophy, such as Elizabeth DePalma Digeser and Gregory Shaw, paint a different picture.[5]

In particular, the present contribution will argue that Porphyry's appropriation of the Christian rhetoric that demonizes traditional forms of sacrifice can only be understood in the context of his philosophical contests with Iamblichus on the universal importance of theurgy. Although Porphyry's construction of evil daemons mirrored Christian ones found in the works of writers such as Origen, he disagreed with Origen on the question of whether it is possible for all souls to avoid demonic pollution and achieve salvation. On this point, Origen and Iamblichus were more closely allied in a common concern about the kinds of everyday practices that affected the soul's salvation and aided in its achieving freedom from suffering, pollution, and the influence of evil spirits. One final aim of this paper is to demonstrate that the flourishing of daemonological writing among these third-century writers was motivated by a desire to reorder and reconstruct the experience of spirits at the level of local religion. According to recent work by David Frankfurter, these daemonologies tended to be "divorced from the local experience of spirits" yet pretended to embrace and define it.[6] According to Frankfurter, spirits at the local, everyday level are experienced as diverse, unclassified, individual, capricious, and ambiguous. Writers and ritual experts working in a daemonological mode seek to impose an order on this amorphous realm. Frankfurter explains:

> Demonologies seek to control—through order, through writing, through the ritual power of declaration—a chaotic world of misfortune, temptation, religious conflict, and spiritual ambiguity. . . . Demonology collects from and attends to these various domains of apparent demonic action, yet its intent lies in grasping totality, simplifying and abstracting immediate experience for the sake of cosmic structures.[7]

Late antique Jews and Christians were not alone in their pursuit and production of the totalizing discourse that daemonology imposes on a world of local spirits and popular religious understandings and rituals. Platonist philosophers such as Porphyry and Iamblichus were equally engaged in daemonological systematization. And the parallels between their conclusions and those of Christian writers were often dramatic.

Porphyry on animal sacrifice

In the second and third centuries CE one of the most interesting rhetorical moves developed by Christian apologists, philosophers, and polemicists was to demonize the traditional Greek and Roman gods, repeatedly associating these gods with evil spirits. It is difficult to determine when this strategy first developed, but we find it consistently used in the works of writers such as Justin Martyr, Minucius Felix, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius, to name but a few.[8] We also find continuing evidence for its deployment in hagiographical works from the fourth century that pit Christian holy men and women against local gods and daemons. For instance, St. Thekla freed Seleucia of the "daemons" Sarpadon, Athena, Aphrodite, and their chief, Zeus.[9] This rhetorical move could be interpreted as evidence for intense conflict between self-identifying Christians and believers in and practitioners of traditional religion. Such an interpretation, however, oversimplifies the situation, especially in the case of third-century intellectual history.

Porphyry of Tyre, traditionally considered a most rabid critic of Christianity in this period, wrote a work entitled *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, a work in which he tried to convince his wayward friend Firmus Castricius to abstain from eating meat because of its association with evil daemons and their pollution.[10] In *On Abstinence* Porphyry made use of a wide variety of arguments for why those who live a philosophical life and attempt to assimilate themselves to divinity should not kill animals or eat meat. The most interesting argument is his association of blood and meat with these spirits. Porphyry explained that most people live with a confused conception of whom they propitiate when they offer such sacrifices. He complained of a general misunderstanding that the class of daemons is undifferentiated and will harm humans if neglected and help them if propitiated.[11] According to Porphyry, this view confuses two different kinds of spirits. Good daemons are those souls which "administer large parts of the regions below the moon, resting on their *pneuma* but controlling it by reason."[12] Evil daemons, on the other hand, are controlled by their *pneuma* and carried away by anger and appetite associated with it:[13]

> It is they who rejoice in the "drink-offerings and smoking meat" on which their pneumatic part grows fat, for it lives on vapors and exhalations in a complex fashion and from complex sources and it draws power from the smoke that arises from blood and flesh.[14]

In *On Philosophy from Oracles* Porphyry also addressed the association of evil daemons with blood sacrifices.[15] He argued that certain Egyptian and

Phoenician practices, such as violently killing animals in temples by dashing them against the ground, did not constitute a sacrifice to the gods but was rather a means of driving away evil daemons so that "on their departure the presence of the god may be granted."[16] In this interpretation, then, the slaying of animals in the context of Egyptian ritual had nothing to do with the worship of the gods. The idea that animal sacrifices actually propitiate evil daemons and are not appropriate offerings for true divinity is prefigured in earlier Christian writings. Origen, in *Contra Celsum*, writes that these spirits either occupy images and temples because they have been invoked by certain magical spells or because they have taken over the place through their own efforts in order to "greedily partake of the portions of the sacrifices and seek for illicit pleasure."[17]

In other fragments from *On Philosophy from Oracles*, Porphyry further explained why handling and ingesting meat was more universally problematic. His views in this work complemented those found in *On Abstinence*. He claimed that every house is full of evil daemons. He also made the following claims:

> And furthermore, every body is full of them. For they especially take delight in those beings well-fed on grasses (*ταῖς ποιαῖς τροφαῖς*).For when we are eating, they approach and sit near the body, and the purifications are because of this, not because of the gods, so that those ones [the evil daemons] might depart. But they especially delight in blood and impurities and they take enjoyment of these[,] entering into those who use them.[18]

Minucius Felix came close to prefiguring this explanation for daemonic possession in his *Octavius*. There he wrote that these evil daemons like "being gorged on the fumes of altars or the sacrifices of cattle."[19] Indeed, they go to great lengths to be propitiated in this way. They creep "secretly into human bodies, with subtlety as being spirits, they feign diseases, alarm the minds, wrench the limbs."[20] Minucius Felix called their disturbed victims "prophets without a temple."[21] Receiving what they desire, namely, the fumes and blood of sacrifices, the evil spirits affected a cure by leaving their victims.[22] Porphyry also held these beings accountable for human illness and plague.[23]

The idea that evil daemons are responsible for disease runs counter to the contentions of Plotinus, Porphyry's teacher. In *Ennead* II.9.14 Plotinus critiqued those members of his circle whom he called "gnostics" for believing that diseases are caused by daemons.[24] Although Armstrong translates the passage using "evil spirits," Plotinus' own language does not

specify the kind of spirits at stake. Plotinus, however, contrasted this view of the origin of disease with the medical one in which disease is the result of excess, deficiency, strain, or decay. Plotinus mocked the "gnostic" view by inquiring as to how various cures work on these spirits. He asked, "Does the demon [daemon] starve, and does the drug make it waste away, and does it sometimes come out all at once or stay inside?"[25] Porphyry, in contrast, was quite precise in his discussions of the relationship between evil spirits and the body. In another fragment from *On Philosophy from Oracles*, Porphyry discussed the actual physical effect these spirits can have on human beings, and he attributed further appetitive and physical phenomena to their interference.

> For universally, the vehemence of the desire towards anything, and the impulse of the lust of the spirit, is intensified from no other cause than their presence; and they also force men to fall into inarticulate noises and flatulence by sharing the same enjoyment with them. For where there is a drawing in of much breath, either because the stomach has been inflated by indulgence, or because eagerness from the intensity of pleasure breathes out much and draws in much of the outer air, let this be clear proof to you of the presence of such spirits there.[26]

In other words, evil daemons are the cause and somehow the beneficiaries of human gluttony and sexual lust. And they both incite human beings to participate in these more enthusiastically, but also physically enter the body in such moments through the breath. Indeed, ingestion and incorporation of one body into another, either through eating or through copulation, is a risky business, one fraught with the dangers of pollution and alteration. Here Porphyry has signaled that danger by positing the presence of wicked daemons as participants in such human acts.

The Christian work that comes closest to Porphyry's assertion that evil daemons enter the bodies of human beings to enjoy food and sex is the *Pseudo-Clementine Homily 9*. Although this anonymous work is usually dated to the fourth century, scholars contend that it is based on earlier material that would have been contemporary to or earlier than Porphyry's works.[27] In the *Homily* the author explained why it is that evil daemons come to inhabit the bodies of the intemperate: "Being spirits, and having desires after meats and drinks and sexual pleasures, but not being able to partake of these by reasons of their being spirits, and wanting organs fitted for their enjoyment, they enter into the bodies of men in order that, getting organs to minister to them, they may obtain the things that they wish."[28]

The parallels between Porphyry and contemporary Christian writers on the nature and effects of evil daemons do not end there. In *On Abstinence* Porphyry accused these spirits of being the cause of almost every form of natural and human evil. According to him, they were responsible for plagues, as noted earlier, crop failures, and earthquakes. Furthermore, they incite humans to lust and longing for wealth and power, all of which lead to civil conflict and wars.[29] And they do all of this by deceiving ordinary people into thinking that they are gods, and also that "the same [behavior] applies to the greatest gods, to the extent that even the best god is made liable to these accusations . . . "[30] Porphyry also shared with Christians the view that evil daemons can and do inhabit the human body and cause disease. He agreed with them more generally that those traditional rituals requiring the slaughter of animals were part of a grand conspiracy on the part of these spirits to get what they desired and even needed to thrive—the blood and smoke of sacrifices. In this way, they deceived the unwitting about the nature of true divinity. Finally, both Porphyry and his Christian counterparts believed that participation in these sorts of practices was ultimately polluting. Indeed, the issues of purity and pollution are central here in both cases.[31]

One might ask precisely how Porphyry came to share such ideas about evil daemons with his Christian counterparts. Although it is impossible to determine the precise conditions under which this agreement arose, Hans Lewy has offered an intriguing suggestion that warrants discussion here. In an appendix to his book on the Chaldean oracles, Lewy argues that Porphyry's daemonology was indebted to a work, no longer extant, entitled "On Demons."[32] This treatise was attributed to a certain Origen, student of the Alexandrian teacher Ammonius Saccas and author of another work entitled "That the King Is the Sole Creator." There is an ongoing debate among scholars concerning whether the author of these two works is the same as the Christian writer Origen.[33] If one follows the compelling arguments Elizabeth DePalma Digeser offers in her article in this volume for assuming one and not two Origens, then we are left with the very exciting possibility that Porphyry may even have based his daemonology directly on work by Origen himself. Again, there is no way of proving this direct connection. But if Lewy thought that Porphyry was directly influenced by the daemonological insights of a "pagan" Origen, it is not implausible that he was influenced by the Christian Platonist, based on the similarities between their respective views on evil spirits.

There is one issue on which Porphyry differed from Christian writers. That is his prognosis of the ordinary person's chance of avoiding the pollution associated with evil daemons. Although, as we will see shortly, Porphyry's position is most starkly opposed to Origen's, it would be a

mistake to suppose that Origen was the real target of Porphyry's rhetoric in *On Abstinence*. He himself indicated that it was other philosophers with whom he contended. Hence, before discussion turns to the differences between Porphyry and Origen, we need to consider Porphyry's debate with his fellow Platonist and former student, Iamblichus. Investigating this distinction will help to explain why Porphyry, to all appearances a staunch defender of Greek religion, especially against its detractors the Christians, would have excised from religious practice a whole set of rituals considered for centuries to be absolutely vital to the well-being of states, communities, families, and individuals.

Porphyry and Iamblichus on the Importance of Theurgy to the Philosophical Life

Iamblichus wrote his *On the Mysteries* in response to a work by Porphyry called the *Letter to Anebo*. According to the editors of a recent translation of Iamblichus' treatise, the letter was somehow aimed at Iamblichus and "at what Porphyry saw as his ex-pupil's interest in the occult, typified in the Hellenic mind by certain Egyptian (or pseudo-Egyptian) magical practices."[34] The term "magical" is problematic here and should be replaced by the word "theurgical," for this is term Iamblichus used to discuss his project. *On the Mysteries*, then, was a defense of the importance of theurgy, even over and above theology and philosophy. The term theurgy (θεουργία), meaning "god work," originated with second-century Platonists who used it to refer to the "deifying power of Chaldean rituals."[35] Iamblichus took this idea further and argued that traditional religious rituals were established and given to human souls by the gods and that these cult practices exemplified divine principles that provided for the deification of the human soul. The human soul, according to Iamblichus, was the lowest of divine beings (ἔσκατος κόσμος). Hence, it needed to be freed from the body to realize its true nature.[36]

Iamblichus' criticisms of Porphyry's questions and positions on the issue of theurgic practices were pointed and at times even strike the reader as mean-spirited. But for Iamblichus, not only the salvation of the philosopher's soul was at issue—he was also concerned for the salvation of all souls. Furthermore, the place of the philosopher as ritual expert in a changing religious and ideological landscape was also of central concern for him. Throughout much of *On the Mysteries* Iamblichus chided Porphyry for his almost global failure to understand the nature of daemons, both good and evil, as well as that of other kinds of spiritual beings. First, his former teacher attributed a kind of corporeality to these entities which, on philosophical grounds, they could not have.[37] Porphyry confused questions about their essence with questions concerning accidental

qualities, of which daemons had none because of their incorporeality. But the worst blunder of all was Porphyry's claim that some daemons were "ensnared by the vapors of, in particular, animal sacrifices" and that these sacrifices nourished spirits of this sort who were somehow dependent on them.[38] Iamblichus objected to the entirety of Porphyry's opinion on this issue. First, as we have seen, Iamblichus believed that all sacrifices were divinely ordained.[39] That is, ordained practices worked in such a way as to affirm and strengthen the bonds of *philia* and *sympatheia* established by gods, heroes, daemons, and other good spirits with human souls. When humans performed the divine rites, they activated relationships already built into the fabric and order of the cosmos. According to Iamblichus, each cosmic level had its appropriate set of rituals.[40] In the case of blood sacrifices, these rites did not propitiate evil daemons, rather they were the "perfect sacrifice" for those "material gods" who "embrace matter within themselves and impose order on it."[41] Iamblichus wrote: "And so, in sacrifices, dead bodies deprived of life, the slaughter of animals and the consumption of their bodies, and every sort of change and destruction, and in general processes of dissolution are suitable to those gods who preside over matter."[42] These animal sacrifices helped and healed the worshipper who was constrained by the body and suffered accordingly. They also aided in the release of the soul from its attachment to the body. Indeed, Iamblichus argued that human beings were frequently involved with gods and good daemons who watched over the body, "purifying [it] from impurities, freeing it from disease, cutting away what is heavy or sluggish."[43]

Iamblichus used fire to explain how sacrifices symbolize the way in which these spirits help human souls to become free: "The offering of sacrifice by means of fire is actually such as to consume and annihilate matter, assimilate it to itself rather than assimilating itself to matter, and elevating it towards the divine and heavenly and immaterial fire."[44] This explanation of the transformative power of sacrifice ran counter to Porphyry's mere propitiation of evil spirits. One sacrificed and burned animals, their flesh and blood, in order to become free from flesh and body. Instead of being a polluting practice, it was a purifying one.

Iamblichus insisted that the order in which sacrifices were to be performed could be neither altered nor circumvented. Even the individual who had dedicated his or her life to philosophical pursuits and theological speculation, if he or she wished to be healed of the suffering associated with embodiment and generation, must perform the proper sacrifices in the correct order and manner.[45] This position ran counter to the one Iamblichus represented as Porphyry's, namely, that one can think one's way out of the bonds of nature, regardless of one's ritual participation.

Porphyry was of the opinion that the philosopher did not need theurgy but could reach God by virtue of the intellect.[46] Iamblichus, however, denied that philosophers could escape ritual practices in this way.

Porphyry's position raised another concern for Iamblichus. Although he fully recognized that not all human beings could become completely purified or free from the grip of matter and return to the soul's source—an end reserved for the true philosopher, the priest of the highest god—Iamblichus did not wish to consign ordinary people to a polluted existence, laboring under the delusion that the sacrifices they performed benefited them when in fact they contributed to their spiritual demise. He explains: "So if one does not grant some such mode of worship to cities and peoples not freed from the fated processes of generation and from a society dependent on the body, one will continue to fail of both types of good, both the immaterial and the material; for they are not capable of receiving the former, and for the latter they are not making the right offering."[47] In other words, Iamblichus objected to what he understood to be Porphyry's denial of universal salvation. Augustine, in his *City of God*, claimed that Porphyry was searching for a universal way, a way to salvation for all souls, not just the souls of a few elite philosophers.[48] But on Augustine's account, Porphyry failed in his endeavor because he could not overcome his pride and accept that Christianity constituted the answer to his search. It is impossible to determine whether Porphyry ever earnestly sought to find some *via universalis*. But it is obvious from *On Abstinence* that he felt that the salvific regimen he proposed to Firmus Castricius was one that very few people could attain.[49] Hence Porphyry was making an argument for a form of ritual purity that he recognized openly could only pertain to a small elite group of specially trained, spiritually devout philosophers. By upbraiding his friend for incontinence where animal food is concerned, he was not prescribing a way of life for everyone. Rather, he highlighted precisely what set him and his peers apart from the ordinary person, namely, his theological knowledge and his ascetic purity. After all, Porphyry called the philosopher the "priest of the god who rules all."[50]

In establishing his own cachet as an expert on religious matters and in setting himself apart from the masses on the basis of his wisdom and way of life, Iamblichus was engaged in a similar task. He claimed that "only the theurgists know these things exactly through having made a trial of them."[51] In this way, the theurgist, the one who knows the proper order of sacrifices and other rituals, was not only the "priest of the god who rules all"[52] but the priest of all the gods, heroes, daemons, archangels, angels, and archons. In this way Iamblichus placed his own theological and theurgical expertise in a larger context than Porphyry did. He saw

himself as providing a means for the salvation of more than just the philosopher. This salvation may have only been partial or truncated. But at the very least, he set the average practitioner of traditional religion on the path to salvation by participation in rituals that honored different orders of good spirits. Furthermore, the theurgist or priestly philosopher was the one who could broker this salvation effectively for others. So although both Porphyry and Iamblichus admitted that few souls could become completely purified and freed from embodiment, Iamblichus saw purification as a process in which all souls could participate. And he disagreed with the idea that most souls were constrained to live a polluted existence, a pollution that afflicted them not only because they were prone to enjoy a good meal now and then and participate enthusiastically in carnal pleasure, but, even more tragically, because they worshipped what they believed were gods with harmful sacrifices.

Origen's *Via Universalis*

Although Iamblichus sought to remedy some of the difficult implications of Porphyry's views on popular religion and although he sought to put all participants in traditional ritual on the path to purification, he still maintained with Porphyry that it was not possible for everyone to be a philosopher and to achieve complete release from corporeality and generation. One aspect of Christianity that was particularly offensive to many intellectual elites in the late antique world was the idea that all believers were like philosophers, not only saved and purified but also in possession of true wisdom.[53] This was, for those living the philosophical life, an impossibility and an affront. Without rigorous ascetic training and intense contemplation, there was no way that the ordinary person could be on a par with a Plotinus or a Sosipatra. What was equally offensive to some Hellenes was the way in which many average Christians did take up ascetic practices, at times with embarrassing zeal. But we must keep in mind that Christians had only one chance at salvation. For Porphyry, the idea that the average person who enjoyed sex or food was at risk of becoming possessed was not troubling in the same way it would be for Origen. Because Porphyry followed the Platonic belief in the reincarnation of souls, in his estimation the average human being who had regular congress with evil daemons in this life and who lived in a state of pollution was not eternally doomed as he or she might be in the Christian scheme of things. Rather, although the soul of such an individual might descend into Hades at the end of this life, being too moist and heavy to rise above the earth and ascend to the supra-lunary sphere, it might well have a chance in the next life to live a relatively unpolluted existence. This soul could dry out, so to speak, through ascetic and contemplative

practices.[54] It could be strengthened and purified. Furthermore, Platonists believed that the world was eternal and they objected to the Christian view that God would act in the cosmos in a historical way.[55] Origen was one of the most innovative of early Christian writers in creating an historical narrative for the soul's descent and eventual salvation, a narrative that fundamentally undercut the cyclicality of the Platonic framework. Hence, although Origen and Porphyry shared similar views regarding the polluting effects of blood sacrifices, Origen, like most other Christian thinkers, believed that this daemonic pollution should and could be avoided by everyone. The principal means for doing so was to avoid participating in traditional cult.

Although Origen wrote before Porphyry, his *On First Principles* responded to an ideological stance similar to Porphyry's, one that denied the possibility of a universal path. Origen opposed the assertion that there were different and fixed orders of human souls each with different possibilities for salvation. He attributed this idea to Marcion, Valentinus, and Basilides.[56] According to Origen's interpretation of this scheme, these different paths were the direct result of different creative agents in the universe—one good and one deceptive and defective. Origen countered this notion of a hierarchy of souls in *On First Principles* with what some have called his "universalism" or *apocatastasis*, the idea that eventually all souls will be saved. This schema is also supported in some of Origen's homilies.

As noted earlier, Origen, like other Platonists, constructed a systematic discourse that ordered the realm of spirits and spoke to questions concerning the origin, status, and nature of various kinds of rational souls. For him, these were matters of theological speculation because Jesus Christ and the apostles did not clearly state what existed before and would exist after this world.[57] One of his main concerns was to explain why some rational souls happened to be angels, others evil daemons, and still others, humans. God could not be held responsible for these differences, Origen insisted, because that would imply that God either created deficient beings or participated in the fall of good ones.[58] Origen claimed, instead, that all rational souls were created equal and each made a primordial choice with regard to its Creator. This choice subsequently situated each soul in the cosmic order. Hence a single framework or narrative encompassed angels, evil spirits, and humans. For Origen, all rational souls were capable of earning censure or praise, and each one found itself within the spiritual order based on its prior merits and free choices. This was the reason why humans were situated between angels and evil daemons in a state of struggle and trial.[59] Yet at no point did Origen posit that the primordial choices a certain rational soul made and

which determined where it fit in the cosmos permanently severed the creature from the Creator. His notion that all souls shared a common primordial nature is mirrored in his discussions of the soul's restoration.

This process of restoration was, in fact, how Origen conceived of the afterlife. In the case of the human soul, its earthly tenure was but one stage in its soteriological journey. Origen, however, did not seem to make clear distinctions between kinds of rational souls, suspending judgment about the fate of the souls of evil daemons. Origen explained his *via universalis*, his universal path of salvation for all creation, by interpreting the fire of hell as a purgative, restorative, purifying process that was to be commensurate in intensity and duration with both the original fall and subsequent actions of each rational soul. Interpreting Isaiah 50:2, "Walk in the light of your own fire, and in the flame which ye have kindled," Origen claimed that "every sinner kindles for himself the flame of his own fire, and is not plunged into some fire which has been already kindled by another, or was in existence before himself."[60] In a Greek fragment preserved in Leontius of Byzantium which Koetschau includes in his edition of *On First Principles,* Origen was supposed to have stated that "there is a resurrection of the dead, and there is punishment, but not everlasting. For when the body is punished the soul is gradually purified, and so is restored to its ancient rank."[61] The most controversial implication, however, is the possibility that even evil daemons might be restored. Origen never denies this possibility in *On First Principles*, and he may even have stated this position explicitly. In Justinian's *Epistle ad Mennam* one finds the following fragment that Koetschau also includes at the end of book 2, chapter 10: "For all wicked men, and for daemons, too, punishment has an end, and both wicked men and daemons shall be restored to their former rank."[62]

Where Origen focused on the role of the purgative and purificatory fire in the soul's restoration in *On First Principles*, in his *Homily on 1 Kings 28* he added a further dimension to this drama. The homily concerns one of the strangest episodes in Hebrew scripture, namely, the story of Saul conjuring Samuel through the help of a medium in En-dor. In his treatment, Origen did not directly address the issue of necromantic practice itself. Rather, he was at pains to explain why Samuel, a prophet of God, was in Hades. The implications for Origen's audience are obvious. He writes: "[S]ince the history about Saul and the medium affects all, there is a necessary truth regarding its subject. For who, after departing this life, wants to be under the sway of a little demon, in order that a medium may bring up not just one who by chance has believed but Samuel the prophet . . . ?[63]

Origen has implied, then, that mediums generally work necromantic rites using "little demons." But this could not be in Samuel's case. Nor would Origen concede that the rite may have been performed by an evil daemon posing as Samuel. For no "little demon" could have known what was in God's plan with regard to the end of Saul's reign and the beginning of David's. Origen insisted that Samuel must have been in Hades and that it was his soul that the medium brought up.[64] But what was the soul of a prophet doing in Hades? As it turns out, he was prophesying and proclaiming the eventual arrival of Christ in that place. And Samuel was not the only prophetic figure to continue his work in the afterlife. According to Origen, John the Baptist also went to Hades. This is fitting given that his prophetic vocation began even before birth when he witnessed Jesus' presence in Mary's womb.[65] For Origen, then, the life of the soul, although it does not pass through cycles of reincarnation, indeed because it does not do so, undergoes a process of salvation that far outstrips its earthly tenure. And although each rational soul must be purified by the fire it kindles, it is not without resources—prophets, healers, and angels—to help it along. In fact, in their capacity as post mortem ministers of God, the blessed bear a very close resemblance to angels.

Origen situated this discussion within a "historical" framework, the framework that Porphyry found so objectionable. Before Jesus Christ's death, Origen insisted, it was impossible for souls to come near to the Tree of Life because God "stationed the Cherubim and the fiery sword to protect the way of the Tree of Life."[66] The blessed would wait there, "handling God's business because of those unable to exist where the Tree of Life is . . . "[67] Hence, the souls of the blessed, like Samuel, assisted in the business of God much like angels do. Notably, it is difficult here, as it is in *On First Principles*, to distinguish between various orders of souls.

Iamblichus seems to have taken a similar view on the role of blessed and pure souls in the salvific work of the divine. As Sarah Iles Johnston notes, Iamblichus held the view that the truly virtuous would become angels after death but would re-descend to earth and in a new incarnation teach and participate in the demiurgic recreation and reordering of the cosmos.[68] As Johnston sees it, "The opportunity to spend one's life putting into effect what he [the theurgist] had spent all of the last one learning constituted Paradise indeed."[69] In other words, like Origen's prophets in Hades, Iamblichus' reincarnated angelic souls continue their pursuit of a sort of universal, albeit circumscribed, salvation.

Johnston sees the Iamblichean system of angelic afterlife and reincarnation as a hybrid between J. Z. Smith's locative and utopian systems. I would argue that Origen resembles Iamblichus in this respect as

well, but the spiritual topography, the various loci where angelic, human, and evil daemonic souls are located and relocated, varies to reflect Christian soteriology and cosmology.

Conclusion

The resemblances between Origen and both Porphyry and Iamblichus, as well as the disagreements between these latter two, all call into question the appropriateness of the conflict model for understanding relations between Christian and non-Christian intellectuals in the third century. By using daemonology as a lens through which to view the interrelationships between these three thinkers, we are required to rethink long-standing characterizations of this period as one of hostility and violent disagreement. As Elizabeth DePalma Digeser's contribution to this volume clearly demonstrates, these characterizations have led some scholars to posit increasingly elaborate theses to avoid the situation in which Christians and non-Christians attended the same schools, thought the same things about divinity and other spirits, shared their writings with each other and so forth. The most dramatic example in her article involves some of the same figures who populate this paper, namely, Origen and Porphyry. For instance, some scholars have been led to posit multiple Origens and multiple Ammonii in order to avoid the more likely historical situation that the Christian Origen was a student of the important Alexandrian Platonist Ammonius Saccas and subsequently became the teacher of Porphyry, student of Plotinus and follower of this same Ammonius. This is not to say that these thinkers did not disagree with each other on certain key philosophical and theological questions. But their disagreements were not always or even predominantly determined by their religious identity. Furthermore, as the disagreement between Porphyry and Iamblichus suggests, religious identity for non-Christian intellectuals and philosophers was itself in flux in this period. Hence, just as recent scholarship has argued for the existence of a diversity of early Christianities, so too we find evidence for multiple interpretations and expressions of Greek and Roman religion at this time. Thus multivocity appears to be the primary characteristic of religious thought and practice in the third century. The main problem with the conflict model for studying this period is that it assumes not only that cross-communal relations were universally hostile but, more important, it assumes that religious identity was itself fixed and that it was the primary category individuals used to locate themselves ideologically and socially. When seeking alternatives to this model, then, the work of Drake on fourth-century dynamics between Christians and non-Christians serves as a viable and important alternative. By making use of some of Drake's key

assumptions, this paper has shown that similar dynamics were manifest among third-century intellectuals. Finally, exploring daemonological discourse in the works of late antique thinkers such as Origen, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, we notice a broad, overarching concern within this milieu for the salvation of the soul, its return to its source, as well as its practical handling of impediments along the way. One such impediment was the polluting effects of a very clearly valenced class of maleficent spirits ordered within a universal theological discourse.

NOTES

1. Parts of this paper were presented at the 2007 Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity Conference (Boulder, Colorado) and at the 2007 International Patristics Conference (Oxford) as part of panels and workshops on Neoplatonism and Christianity. I would like to thank colleagues at both of these meetings for their helpful suggestions. I would also like to thank Elizabeth DePalma Digeser and Tom Sizgorich for reading drafts of this paper.
2. Notes on terminology: First, I will do my best to avoid the pejorative term "pagan" while at the same time avoiding the use of awkward alternatives. Instead I will use the phrases "non-Christian," "practitioners of" or "believers in traditional Greek and Roman religion," "traditional religionists," and so forth. I will use the term "Hellene" to refer more specifically to philosophers and intellectual elites who saw themselves as providing a rationale for and defense of traditional religious ideas, beliefs, and practices. Second, I use the term "daemon" rather than "demon" and qualify it with either good or evil in order to stay as close as possible to the ancient use of the term. The word "demon" currently has a negative valence and can be misleading for this reason. I use "daemonology" to refer to discourses about the various spiritual beings that inhabited that late antique cosmos. I use the terms demon and demonology only when referring to evil spirits.
3. H. A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance*, *Ancient Society and History* (Baltimore, 2000), 246. Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, *Divinations* (Philadelphia, 2004). As Boyarin has shown, in the case of Jewish-Christian relations up to and even beyond the fourth century, this conflict model fails to account for important aspects of the "parting of the ways," the main one being its temporal scope.
4. For important studies on this theological common ground between Christians and Hellenes, see Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede, *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1999).
5. See Elizabeth DePalma Digeser's contribution to this volume. See also Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park, 1995).

6. David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Ritual Abuse in History* (Princeton, 2006), 24.
7. Ibid., 26-27.
8. J. Z. Smith, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity" *ANRW* 2.16.1, 426-427. For the role of demonology in the formation of monastic identity, see the following: David Brakke, "The Making of Monastic Demonology: Three Ascetic Teachers on Withdrawal and Resistance," *Church History* 70 (2001), and idem, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).
9. Gilbert Dagron, *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle, texte grec, traduction et commentaire* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1978), 291-297. See miracles 1 through 4.
10. Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, trans. Gillian Clark (Ithaca, 2000), 2.37.
11. Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, 2.37.
12. Ibid., 2.38.
13. Ibid., 2.38. The word *pneuma* has a wide range of meanings from spirit to breath to angel. Porphyry has in mind something that is in part corporeal and hence "passible and corruptible" (2.39).
14. Ibid., 2.42.
15. This work only exists in fragmentary form, most of the extant portions surviving in Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel*.
16. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, 4.28, trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford (Grand Rapids, 1981). See also Andrew Smith and Devid Wasserstein, *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Stuttgart, 1993), 326F.
17. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 7.64, trans, Henry Chadwick (Cambridge, 1965).
18. Smith and Wasserstein, *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, 326F. My translation.
19. Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 27. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (Grand Rapids, 1965) 5.4, 190.
20. Ibid., 27.
21. Ibid., 27.
22. Eusebius holds the same view about the way evil daemons ravage bodies and then release them from suffering in order to "fake" a cure. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, 5.2.
23. Porphyry, *On Abstinence*, 2.40.
24. It is impossible to determine who, precisely, Plotinus was referring to with his remarks. Porphyry is the one who gives them the title *gnostikoi*. But they could have been people who considered themselves philosophers or Christians or both. They might also have been followers of specific teachers such as Valentinus or Basilides. For recent discussions about the problem with the term "Gnostic" and the difficulty of identifying specific historical individuals who qualify as such, see the excellent discussions by both Michael Williams and Karen King. Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, 1996), Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).
25. Plotinus, *Enneads,* 2.9.14, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA, 1966).

26. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, 4.23. Smith and Wasserstein, *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, 326F. Gifford's translation.
27. H. A. Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology, and Drama* (Ithaca, 1985), 124.
28. *Pseudo-Clementine Homily* 9.10. Alexander Roberts et al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, American repr. of the Edinburgh ed., 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, 1980), 8.277.
29. Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, 2.40.
30. Ibid.
31. The recent dissertation of Dayna Kalleres has demonstrated that the centrality of exorcism in the preparation of catechumens for baptism was in part motivated by the desire of church officials to purify new members of this pollution, a pollution engendered by their former participation in traditional sacrifices. "Exorcising the Devil to Silence Christ's Enemies: Ritualized Speech Practices in Late Antique Christianity" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 2002).
32. Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic, and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*, new ed., ed Michel Tardieu (Paris, 1978), 497-508.
33. Mark Edwards in his article "Ammonius, Teacher of Origen" (*JEH* 44 [1993]) has argued that the Platonist Origen who studied with Ammonius could not have been the Christian Origen, author of *De Principiis* and *Contra Celsum*. But Eusebius claimed that Origen studied with Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of Plotinus. He also wrote that the young Porphyry, Plotinus's student, knew Origen and may have studied with him (*Church History*, 6.19). At the very least, he was close enough to the man to know the contents of Origen's library. See Elizabeth DePalma Digeser's contribution to this volume for a thorough and compelling discussion of the question.
34. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, trans. Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell (Leiden, 2004), 29.
35. Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park, 1995,) 4.
36. Ibid., 45.
37. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, 1.16.
38. *On the Mysteries*, 5.10.
39. *On the Mysteries* , 5.9.
40. *On the Mysteries,* 5.9: "Since these relationships are numerous, and some have an immediate source of influence, as in the case of daemonic ones, while others are superior to these, having divine causes, and, higher than these again, there is the one pre-eminent cause, all these levels of cause are activated by the performance of perfect sacrifice; each level of cause is related to the sacrifice in accordance with the rank to which it has been allotted."
41. *On the Mysteries,* 5.14.
42. *On the Mysteries*, 5.14.
43. *On the Mysteries*, 5.16.
44. *On the Mysteries*, 5.11.
45. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, 2.11.

46. "The rest of humanity relies on theurgy: it is not the intellectual part, however, but the vehicle or lower part, that is purified. Although the soul once purified in this way has communion with the ethereal gods, it cannot return to the Father." Michael B. Simmons, "Porphyry of Tyre's Biblical Criticism: A Historical and Theological Appraisal," in *Reading in Christian Communities: Essays on Interpretation in the Early Church*, ed. Charles A. Bobertz and David Brakke (South Bend, 2002).
47. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, 2.15.
48. Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans* 10.32. (London, 1957).
49. Porphyry, *On Abstinence*, 2.3. Here Porphyry says that such abstinence "is not advised for everyone without exception, but for philosophers, and among philosophers chiefly for those who make their happiness depend on God and on the imitation of God."
50. Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, 2.49.
51. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, 5.21.
52. Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, 2.49.
53. Eusebius uses this framework throughout his *Preparation for the Gospel*, but in particular, in book 12.
54. Porphyry and Thomas Taylor, *Select Works of Porphyry: Containing His Four Books on Abstinence from Animal Food; His Treatise on the Homeric Cave of the Nymphs; and His Auxiliaries to the Perception of Intelligible Natures* (London, 1823), chap. 32.
55. Indeed, Porphyry found the idea of a noncyclical cosmos offensive: "The idea of God acting in history was ridiculous to Porphyry, who believed in a cyclical pattern of history predetermined by *heimarmenê*. This is the main reason why the Christian interpretation of O[ld] T[estament] prophecy was unacceptable: it was a literary invention *post eventum*, devoid of all historical truth." Simmons, "Porphyry of Tyre's Biblical Criticism," 95. And "Porphyry describes the eschatological doctrines like the resurrection as absurd because it implies that God interrupts the eternal and logical order of his own universe." Ibid., 96.
56. Origen, *On First Principles*, 2.9.5, trans. G. W. Butterworth, *Origen on First Principles: Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis* (Gloucester, 1973).
57. Origen, *On First Principles*, book 1, preface: G. W. Butterworth, *Origen on First Principles: Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis* (Gloucester, 1973).
58. Origen, *On First Principles,* 2.9.5. "The following objection is wont to be raised by many, and particularly by those who come from the schools of Macrion, Valentinus, and Basilides and who assert that souls are in their natures diverse. They ask how it is consistent with the righteousness of God who made the world that on some he should bestow a habitation in the heavens, and not only give them a better habitation, but also confer on them a higher and more conspicuous rank, favoring some with a 'principality,' others with 'powers,' to others again allotting 'dominion,' to others presenting the most magnificent seats in the heavenly courts, while others shine with golden light and gleam with starry brilliance, there being 'one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differeth from another star in glory'" (Butterworth's translation).

59. Ibid., 2.9.6.
60. Ibid., 2.10.4.
61. Ibid., 2.10.7.
62. Ibid., 2.10.7.
63. Origen, *Homily on I Kings (I Samuel) 28.3-25*, 2.1: Origen, *Homilies on Jeremiah: Homily on 1 Kings 28*, trans. John Clark Smith (Washington, D.C., 1998), 320.
64. Ibid., 6.2 (Smith translation, 325).
65. Ibid., 7.3 (Smith translation, 328).
66. Ibid., 9.3 (Smith translation, 332).
67. Ibid., 9.3 (Smith translation, 332).
68. Sarah Iles Johnston, "Working Overtime in the Afterlife; or, No Rest for the Virtuous," in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, ed. Annette Yoshiko Reed Ra'anan S. Boustan (Cambridge, 2004), 89. Johnston cites Iamblichus *De Anima* 1.389.525. This idea is also represented in the *Chaldean Oracles* and Synesios' *Hymn* 1.513.
69. Johnston, "Working Overtime," 100.

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11

TORAH, TORAH, TORAH: THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH IN ANCIENT AND EARLY MODERN TIMES

Paul Sonnino

The seventeenth century was not only the century of the scientific revolution, it was also the century of the biblical one. Beginning with Thomas Hobbes, who questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and picking up momentum with Isaac La Peyrère, Benedict Spinoza, and Richard Simon, by the end of the century both the physics of Aristotle and the integrity of the biblical text had been discredited. But if we can attribute the scientific revolution, at least in part, to new technology, can we say the same thing about biblical criticism? One might argue that the printing press was to biblical criticism what the telescope was to the scientific revolution, but, as Herbert Butterfield and Thomas Kuhn have suggested, there was more to the scientific revolution than mere technology; there was a change in mental attitude.[1] The canons of the Old and New Testaments had been around for as long as the Ptolemaic universe, yet it was not until the seventeenth century that a concerted effort succeeded in belittling both. I do not believe that it is possible to explain why the ancients insisted on being so obtuse and why the early moderns insisted on being so perverse. But I do believe that it is possible to assess the characteristics of biblical criticism in the ancient world as well as the changes in thinking about biblical criticism that took place in the course of the seventeenth century and come up with some distinctions.

In many ways the ancient Hebrews made a much greater contribution to modern historical methodology than the ancient Greeks, for the ancient Hebrews, by conceptualizing their history as the execution of a contract, introduced into it a *criterium veritatis*, namely, that it was based on legal documents. Little wonder that very early in the evolution of what ultimately became known as the J and E documents we find codes of laws, of which the decalogues are the prime example.[2] Not only laws, but, as the documents pile up, decrees, letters, and personal memoirs, the kind of sources that we rarely find transcribed by the Greek and Roman historians. It does not matter that these documents may be fraudulent or may contradict each other, it does not even matter if they were accompanied in the inner sanctums by an assortment of conspiratorial silences or esoteric interpretations; they are presented to the community as being what they purport to be, and it becomes the duty of the presenter to explain rather than to exploit their inconsistencies. And herein lies the rub, for the moment one presents the document as legal evidence, one subjects oneself to cross-examination.

In contrast to the Jewish tradition, the Greek tradition is much less insistent on the legality of the evidence. Let us begin with Herodotus (c. 485–c. 425 BCE). Herodotus was already living at a time when the pre-Socratics and, even more than the pre-Socratics, the Sophists had introduced a healthy bit of skepticism into epistemology. He investigated, he collected evidence, and he presented it with his own tongue held well within his cheek. But to Herodotus the bottom line was as follows: a faulty recollection is better than no recollection. The historian relates the claims of the Egyptian priests that they had been around for thousands of years, and the listener or the reader can come to his or her own conclusions. Thucydides (c. 460/455–c. 400 BCE), of course, had a different purpose in writing history, and that was to analyze the decision-making process. For his purpose a faulty recollection was worse than no recollection at all. Yes, he did do his best to demonstrate that the Trojan War was dwarfed by the Peloponnesian. But for the bulk of his history, he restricted himself to two sources: the universality of human nature—what people were likely to say or do under certain circumstances—and the accounts of eyewitness observers—what people actually did say or do. He was, however, an isolated phenomenon. Everyone paid lip service to his method; no one was prepared to imitate it, much less to abandon the fables of remote times. But what difference did it make? History was not a matter of life and death, as it became to the Hebrews.

Besides, since both J and E were written in classical Hebrew, they bore the stamp of antiquity quite well as long as one did not make too much out of the anachronisms, the contradictions, and the post-mortem

excursions of the supposed author. But the authenticity of J and E did present a problem, especially after the discovery of Deuteronomy, which entailed the centralization of worship in the Temple in Jerusalem, because if this centralization extended to the scrolls of the Law, then the biblical accounts of the destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE, which specify that the Babylonians "burned the house of the Lord," would imply that the most authentic scrolls also went up in smoke. Was this the display of Divine ineptitude that led the fool to say in his heart that there was no God? Certainly the disquieting rumor that the Law had been burned persisted well into the Christian era. And the rumor had more than a grain of truth to it, since Ezra and his collaborators had obviously rounded up the best scrolls they could find and then "creatively" elaborated on them. The new synthesis was new enough that Ezra, on his return from Babylon, had to stage something like a revival meeting in Jerusalem in order to propagate his new and improved Law among the Hebrews.[3]

If there were any doubters in the audience, their dissent was not recorded. The rub began to emerge with Alexander the Great, or more precisely with the second Diaspora, which brought more and more Jews into contact with Greek culture and more and more Greeks into contact with Judaism. It was definitely a two-way street, and the subversive undertone of Ecclesiastes, with its remarkable affinity to the philosophy of Epicurus, demonstrates that in the course of the third century BCE both Jewish and Greek elites were beginning to inhabit a common universe. But with all its hedonism, resignation, and its denial of a future life, the sayings of the preacher did not constitute a direct attack upon the Law as proclaimed by Ezra. Nonetheless, the fact that in the course of the Hellenistic period the term Epicurean (Apikoros) became a generic term of opprobrium hurled against the Sadducee establishment by their Pharisee enemies suggests that the Jewish elite limited their skepticism to the afterlife, to the Mosaic authorship of the Torah, and possibly to the marital status of Cain. On the contrary, the Law as proclaimed by Ezra enjoyed a growing popularity, the proof being that great monument to Judaeo-Hellenistic scholarship, the Septuagint. Whether this translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek was the work of seventy wise men and whether it was funded by a grant from Ptolemy Philadelphus is a matter of some dispute, but what strikes me about it in the context of this chapter is how a committee of very learned Jews pouring over the available scrolls and weighing their every word could not have noticed the anachronisms, the doublings, and the inconsistencies. And what is even more astonishing is that once the Septuagint began to circulate, skeptical Jews and Greeks did not take advantage of the more easily accessible text in order to

impugn it. I think there is only one explanation for this phenomenon, and it lies in the direction of Hellenistic thought.

The days of the Sophists were over. What, after all, had they accomplished with their relativism except to bring about the fall of the Athenian empire? The same was true of the light-hearted repartee of Socrates in Platonism and the heavy-handed pedantry of Aristotle. In their place emerged the more casual philosophies of Epicureanism, Skepticism, and Stoicism, which adapted epistemology to the service of personal conduct. Platonism, which survived best in this environment, did not come through unscathed, and its aficionados, the Neoplatonists, were quick to accommodate it to an ascending scale of realities, in which the *logos*, demons, and local mystery cults all jostled for position.

In this climate of opinion it is hardly surprising if history becomes more and more of a literary form. Yes, there is Polybius (c.203–120 BCE), who made a valiant attempt at analyzing the contemporary institutions of the Romans, but for the most part history becomes the handmaiden of rhetoric, an instrument of blame or praise centering on individual and moral character. This is the case with Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60 BCE–7 CE), who scoured all the available sources, hell bent on demonstrating that the early Romans were originally Greeks. He also has Gaius Mucius present an eloquently improbable speech under imminent threat of torture, only stopping short at including the tradition that he displayed his courage by roasting his right hand on an open flame." Dionysius' contemporary Livy (c. 59 BCE–c. 17 CE) went even further by including the tradition. To Livy, in particular, the verifiability of the event was not essential. What was essential was the moral principle that the event exemplified. Mucius may or may not have displayed such heroism. Livy's point was that there must have been Romans like Mucius "Scaevola" (lefty) in order for Rome to have achieved such success—and of the success there could be no doubt.[4] These kinds of criteria might have been sufficient to the Pharisees had the Hebrews founded a universal monarchy, but for a people whose history was marked by a long sequence of disasters the appeal to a more dependable paper trail was indispensable.

If there were any place in the Hellenistic-Roman period when the clash and combination of cultures might have produced an intensive dissection of the biblical canon it would have been in Alexandria, where a very large Jewish population rubbed shoulders with all aspects of Greek culture and on many occasions came into violent conflict with it. This makes the life and work of Philo Judaeus (c. 20 BCE–c. 50 CE) particularly instructive. He was a pious Jew and an extremely Hellenized one, living in. the Alexandria of the Julio-Claudians, and the common device that he used to defend both his religious tradition and to accommodate it to the

philosophy of the Greeks was the universal solvent of allegory. In his treatise on *The Posterity of Cain*, Philo takes up the question of whether "in the books in which Moses acts as God's interpreter we ought to take his statements figuratively," and Philo's answer is a resounding yes. Otherwise, he says, we would have no grounds for rejecting the impious doctrines of Epicurus or the atheism of the Egyptians. Apparently unaware that if one did not accept his major premise, one could make a mockery of his entire thesis, Philo then goes on to confront what must have been a frequently asked question:

> Is it not reasonable to inquire, what woman Cain knew? For since Eve, who was formed out of Adam's side, there has been hitherto no record of the creation of any other woman . . . What then must we say? . . . "Wife," is, I think, the name [Moses] gives to the opinion held by an impious man's reasoning faculty . . . that the human mind is the measure of all things, an opinion held by an ancient sophist named Protagoras, an offspring of Cain's madness.

Allegory serves Philo to perfection as he takes us through the lives of Abraham, Joseph, and finally Moses, who emerges as a super Romulus, saved from exposure by a miraculous accident and constantly growing in strength and wisdom. What textual problems are not resolved with allegory are resolved with prophesy, for Moses is presented as the greatest lawgiver of all times and a boon to all humanity. His venerable writings were translated, according to Philo, with mathematical precision by the seventy sages, so that the only place where I can again find him confronting the embarrassment of the literal meaning is in accounting for Moses' description of his own death, which Philo duly incorporates under the heading of prophesy. Apparently it worked. Those Jews who took Philo seriously were much too happy to see Moses cutting Plato down to size while the pagan Neoplatonists and Stoics had loftier things to think about than a conceited oriental who was trying to beat them at their own game.[5]

Philo's allegorical interpretations may have permitted him to dispose of the facts, but his fellow multicultural Jew Flavius Josephus (c. 37/8–c. 100 CE) confronted them directly. At first glance, his *Jewish Wars* even outdoes Thucydides in putative precision. Take, for example, Caligula's infamous order to install his own statue in the Temple of Jerusalem. Josephus describes how Petronius, the Roman governor of Syria, wrote to the emperor that "unless he wished to destroy the country as well as its inhabitants, he ought to respect their law and revoke the order." This sounds very much like the very terms of the letter. Of course, after the

failure of his generalship in the Jewish revolt, Josephus' bald-faced excuses for not committing suicide combine the will of Jehovah, his own priestly prophesies, and the law of nature into one of history's greatest examples of the human capacity for self-justification. Still he, of all people, ought to have known what he actually said. But when he gets to his *Jewish Antiquities*, in which he deals with the entire history of his nation, Josephus combines the interventions of God and the actions of man with no less confidence. There is no longer a hint of curiosity as to how Cain obtained his wife. We are asked to believe that Moses was *prescient* enough to write up his own death, and Ezra's expounding of the Law to the people, which Philo did not get up to, is recounted by Josephus with the aid of his much-vaunted biblical documentation. And if there is any doubt that Josephus still believes that his criteria are evidentiary, we have only to read his diatribe against Apion, where Josephus castigates Greek historical writing for its "inconsistencies," "discrepancies," and "original neglect of the Greeks to keep official records of current events." Yet he calls confidently on Chaldean and Egyptian historians to back up his own case, supremely confident that the Jews are the only people who possess a full history of the world since its creation.[6]

These criteria are unprecedented. Josephus is the first historian to make an explicit case for the evidentiary side of Hebrew historical writing. By the same token, he is the first historian to sound exactly like any manual circulating in the American university today. It is true that he hedges his bets, for he adds: "I would call time to witness the excellence of our lawgiver and the revelation concerning God which he has transmitted to us."[7] In other words, Josephus, like Philo, also employs the venerability of the documents as proof of their quality. Still, he lays down the gauntlet and dares the critics to pick it up. The question is whether, by the time he was writing, any critics had emerged in a position to do so. Certainly, in a tradition whose leading historians maintained that Romans were originally Greeks and that Gaius Mucius Scaevola was the prototype for Rocky Balboa, I don't know where such critics could have been found.

It's not that there were no critics. Indeed, I would suspect that the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE gave these critics a perfect occasion to redouble their dismissal of the Law. But if they talked louder and gloated more heartily, their arguments remained the same. The rumor that the Torah had been burned must have been resuscitated, and the "Epicureans" of every stripe must have had a field day. My suspicion may appear to be pure speculation, but I can give a number of examples to support it.

My first example comes from II Esdras: 3-14, *alias* IV Esdras, which is an apocalyptic work originally written in Hebrew, no one knows where,

around 100 CE. The author, claiming to be the original Ezra, goes through seven visions, lamenting the suffering of Israel and revealing God's plan for the "world to come." But it is the seventh and last vision that concerns us here. In it the pseudo-Ezra informs the Lord that "thy law is burnt, therefore no man knoweth the things that are done of thee, or the work that shall begin." To which the Lord commands him to take five scribes into the field for forty days, during which time He personally inspires them to write two hundred and four books, of which He commanded him to keep seventy secret.[8]

Here is a man who, in his apocalyptic diatribe, flatly admits that the Torah has been burned and feels obliged to introduce the assertion that it was miraculously rewritten by Ezra, which clearly demonstrates that, during the author's time, this accusation was causing its share of damage. In contrast, the pseudo-Ezra's explanation to the effect that he and his assistants had come up with "all that has been done since the beginning which were written in the law" suggests that he was making allowances for the post-mortem interpolations. And if a man who was so passionately involved in the controversy could speak with such aplomb, this suggests that anachronism and contradiction were not in themselves *criteria falsitatis* in the religious debates of his time.[9]

As to my second example, it comes from the rabbis of the Mishnah, who compiled their commentaries on the Law and the Prophets in or around Tiberias some fifty or sixty years after the pseudo-Ezra. They do not seem to be particularly worried about the Law having been burned; however, they are conscious of the existence of skepticism about its divinity:

> And these are they who have no share in the world to come; he that says that there is no resurrection of the dead as prescribed in the Law, and that the Law is not from Heaven, and an Epicurean.[10]

Once again, we see the notions of rejection of the world to come, doubts about the authenticity of the Law, and the doctrines of Epicurus amalgamated under the penalty of damnation. In the accompanying Tosefta, which is in part a commentary on the Mishnah and in part a dissenting work, we have the following striking admission:

> R. Jose said: It was fitting that the Law should have been given through Ezra even if Moses had not gone before him. A "going up" is mentioned in the case of Moses and a "going up" in the case of Ezra. Of Moses, as it is written, "And Moses went up unto God," and of Ezra it is written, "And he Ezra went up from Babylon." As

> the "going up" of Moses taught the Law to Israel, as it is written, "And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments," so the "going up" of Ezra taught the Law to Israel, as it is written, "For Ezra had prepared his heart to expound the Law of the Lord and to do it and to teach Israel statutes and judgments." Also a writing and language was given through him, as it is written, "And the writing of the letter was written in the Aramaic tongue." . . . Moreover it is written, "And he shall write a copy of this Law," a law which was at a future time to be changed.[11]

What is so striking in this passage is that it too could account for the anachronistic references in the Pentateuch, for if Moses and Ezra were equally inspired, this would allow Ezra to intervene with such statements as that "no man knows of [Moses'] tomb unto this day." The rabbis may not have gone to the lengths of the pseudo-Ezra in order to make their case, but by the same toke, they did not seem to feel as if they had to. Moreover, if we move from the Mishnah and Tosefta to its further development in the Babylonian Talmud, which incorporates the above two passages, we can see that the question of the authorship of their entire canon did not escape the rabbis:

> Who wrote the Scriptures?—Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam and Job. Joshua wrote the book which bears his name and [the last] eight verses of the Pentateuch. Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the Book of Judges and Ruth. David wrote the Book of Psalms, including in it the work of the elders, namely, Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Yeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. Jeremiah wrote the book which bears his name, the Book of Kings, and Lamentations. Hezekiah and his colleagues wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. The Men of the Great Assembly wrote Ezekiel, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Daniel and the Scroll of Esther. Ezra wrote the book that bears his name and the genealogies of the Book of Chronicles up to his own time. Who then finished it [the Book of Chronicles]?—Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.

There follows a lengthy discussion of these issues after which:

> A certain rabbi was sitting before R. Samuel b. Nahmani and in the course of his expositions remarked, Job never was and never existed, but is only a typical figure. He replied: To confute such as you the text says, There was a man in the land of Uz, Job was his

> name. But, he retorted, if that is so, what of the verse, the poor man had nothing save one poor ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up, etc. Is that anything but a parable? So this too is a parable. If so, said the other, why are his name and the name of his town mentioned?[12]

We see therefore that the rabbis developed a number of strategies with which to deal with textual problems. Nor were the pseudo-Ezra and the rabbis reacting in isolation and only for the Jews. Christian apologists like Tatian (c.110-180) and Cassian (fl. 173) jumped on Josephus' bandwagon by claiming that Hebrew philosophy was the oldest form of wisdom. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-211) not only recapitulates their arguments but he also cites from the pseudo-Ezra, and Tertullian (c. 160–c. 230) admits candidly that "after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians every document of the Jewish literature is agreed to have been restored through Ezra."[13] The authority of the Torah was of concern to Jew and Christian alike, and Josephus, pseudo-Ezra, and the rabbis were all pressed into the service of both religions, even as the Christians gradually replaced the Jews as the disturbers of the *Pax Romana.*

Tacitus (c. 55–c. 120), Lucian (c. 120–c. 180) and Apuleius (c. 125–c. 180) all took a crack at the Christians, but the first concerted attack came from Celsus, who lived toward the end of the second century CE, just when the Roman Empire was at its most imperial. He did so in his *True Word,* originally written in two books, and the fragments that have survived are precisely what one would expect of your garden variety Neoplatonist with a copy of the *Golden Ass* in his library. He begins and ends by complaining about the antisocial character of the Christians. They are to him a secret cult, lacking in rational sophistication, and catering to the worst elements of society. He also attacks the accuracy of the books of Moses and their account of creation, but, it is important to observe, *not their authorship.* He cast aspersions on Jesus' paternity and cannot believe that a God could emerge from such disreputable roots. The Christians, of course, did not pretend to explain it; they were merely thankful that He had decided to do so. Then, after totally misreading the appeal of the new religion, Celsus returns to its antisocial nature. Clearly Celsus was an effete intellectual snob who thought he had an inside track on the good sense of the *logos.* "If idols are nothing to [the Christians], what harm is there in taking part in the feast? If they are demons . . . it is certain that they are no less God's creatures." He sums up with a quote from Homer that is almost a foreshadowing of Thomas Hobbes:

> We must not disobey the ancient writer, who said long ago, "Let one be king, whom the son of crafty Saturn appointed"; and adds: "If you set aside this maxim, you will deservedly suffer for it at the hands of the king. For if all were to do the same as you, there would be nothing to prevent his being left in utter solitude and desertion, and the affairs of the earth would fall into the hands of the wildest and most lawless barbarians; and then there would no longer remain among men any of the glory of your religion or of the true wisdom.

Celsus, alas, had behind him only Homer, Plato, and a few pagan chronographers, who were primarily interested in matching the events of Greek and Roman history. He did not have Christopher Columbus, Galileo, or Thomas Hobbes. He was easy prey, therefore, for Origen of Alexandria (18 -254), to whom we owe most of Celsus' surviving text and who undertook to refute him in eight books. How, Origen replied, could Christians be expected to deny their faith when it was true? Pagan rationalism, he insisted, was completely outclassed by Jewish prophecy, and pagan morality by Christian virtue. And Christian chronographers like Sextus Julius Africanus quickly stepped in to make up for what the pagan chronographers had left out.[14]

In all of antiquity the most famous of the pagans who attempted to refute the biblical canon was Porphyry of Tyre (233-c.304), chronographer and Neoplatonist, whose *Against the Christians* was originally written in fifteen books that have survived only in the form of allusions and fragments preserved by the Christians who attempted to refute him. Yet insofar as I can tell Porphyry devotes much of his attack to the common device of the pagan intelligentsia of ridiculing of the Christians for their plebeian superstitions and ridiculous Holy Books. He is more respectful of the Jews, and what is particularly striking about his writings is that, like Celsus, Porphyry seems to accept the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, even though, again like Celsus, Porphyry claims that it is not the only, or the most reliable, history of the Jews. The brunt of Porphyry's attack, however, is directed to the Book of Daniel, which he insists is a complete forgery, written not during the Babylonian captivity (596-539 BCE) but during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (170-163 BCE), precisely equating Daniel's prediction of the four monarchies with events of the intervening years. These prophecies were a vital link to the Christians in demonstrating the divinity of Jesus, and Porphyry's attack struck them to the core, but as long as the debate revolved around the deciphering of symbols, it was far from being conclusive in the atmosphere of the third and fourth centuries.[15]

The final attack of paganism against Christianity before its triumph came during the reign of Domitian. He seems to have begun moderately before resorting to the more extreme forms of persuasion, and one of his principal propagandists was the judge Sossianus Hierokles, author of a pamphlet titled *The Truth-Loving Discourse*. This pamphlet is lost, but this same Hierokles would seem to reappear as "The Greek" in the *Apokritikos* of a mysterious Christian, Makarios Magnés, who attempted to refute him. "The Greek" seems to draw his inspiration from both Porphyry and Celsus, but the most damning of his accusations rakes up that old and apparently persistent insinuation that the Torah had been burned. He comes right out and says: "Nothing of Moses has been preserved, for it is said that all of his writings were burned, along with the temple, and all that was written in his name after his time—1180 years from Moses' death—was written by Ezra and those around him. Against which accusation Makarios is all ready:

> Because you talked about what Moses' writings underwent during the captivity and that they were rewritten inaccurately by Ezra, it shall be found that they were copied with all accuracy. For it was not one speaking to Ezra and another to Moses, but the same spirit taught both of them and dictated the same things clearly to both. And just as the house was destroyed by the enemies, the same craftsman rebuilt it with his wisdom, fitting each part together with dexterity.

The ease with which Makarios rebuts the argument about the burning may even help to explain Porphyry's unwillingness to embrace it. The rabbis, pseudo-Ezra, and Clement of Alexandria had done their job. A copyist's error, a repetition, or a post-mortem reflection simply did not detract from the notions of "with all accuracy" or "the same things" in the ancient world. This may also explain why it was that in the ancient world it was not the issue of text but the issue of chronology that emerged as the centerpiece of the scholarly debate.[16]

In this debate one of the leading Christian champions was Eusebius (c. 260–337/340), who exploited both pagan and Christian chronographers, including Porphyry and Sextus Africanus, in defense of the Christian religion. One of his earliest writings was the *Chronological Canons*, in which he employed certain reliable dates in order to align the events of Hebrew and pagan history. His purpose, like Josephus', was to demonstrate the antiquity of Jewish record. With the Edict of Milan and the conversion of Constantine, Eusebius, who became bishop of Caesarea in 314, was in a position employ all of his erudition with greater confidence and he did not

fail to do so. Taking a leaf from both Philo and Josephus, and even exploiting the anti-Christian Porphyry, Eusebius, in his *Preparation for the Gospel*, defends the Christian religion by adding a moral and philosophical to his chronological dimension. From this lofty perch, he castigates the pagans for their barbaric religions and conflicting philosophies, in contrast to the Hebrews, who had always been so pious and who possessed in Moses the fount of all wisdom. But even to a greater extent than the Hebrews, Eusebius makes the reproduction of documents the guiding principle of his history. The documents he reproduced were not always reliable, but his apparent erudition proved invaluable in establishing, once and for all, that the Jews were the only people who possessed a full history of the world since its creation. He seems to have such confidence in his evidence that, notwithstanding his familiarity with Porphyry, he quotes from the Book of Daniel without the remotest hint of embarrassment, and in a complementary work, the *Demonstration of the Gospel,* Eusebius devoted three entire books to defending the authenticity of Daniel against Porphyry. Unfortunately, only an excerpt from these three books has survived. It is most likely, however, that Eusebius took the position that the exactitude of Daniel's predictions merely attested to his virtuosity as a prophet. Jerome (c. 347-420), the learned translator of the Old and New Testaments into Latin, acted with similar aplomb. As he wrote in *The Perpetual Virginity of Mary*, "Whether you prefer the view that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch or that Ezra re-edited it . . . I make no objection." And in his *Commentary on Daniel* Jerome not only praises Eusebius' three books on this prophet with what I suspect is a recapitulation of Eusebius' arguments but we also find in this work the rejoinder that the prophets are not responsible for including every detail of history.[17]

Having, at the cost of so many martyrs, succeeded in associating itself with the state, the final mission for the Christian religion in the ancient world was to disassociate itself from it. With the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410, the Christians were confronted with the reproach that their rejection of the pagan gods had been the cause of the disaster. By this time, however, the Christians had in Augustine a man whose own existential struggles coincided perfectly with the despair of a declining civilization. It was easy for him to reply in his *City of God* that the pagan gods had not been that accommodating either. And he also had at his disposal the Hebrew prophets, with their patented recipe for extracting anticipation out of catastrophe. Thus, just as for the Hebrews the study of history was part of a long conversation between God and the Jewish people, so now, in a post prophetic age, the study of history became the key to deciphering God's providential plan for all of humanity. The cities,

of man, it turned out, only rose and fell for the greater glory of the city of God. Everything was subordinated to it. What emerges from this grand vision, therefore, is a full-blown theory of universal history, through which we can glimpse that God only allowed the rise of the Roman Empire in order to provide a proper setting for the spread of Christianity. This vision, moreover, entails immense confidence in the reliability of the entire biblical canon, and Augustine has it. As to Cain, for example, Augustine responds to "the apparently incredible Scriptural story of a city built by a single man in a period just after the fratricide" with an appeal both to biblical and non-biblical accounts of the longevity of the first humans. Like Jerome, Augustine does not require Jehovah to give us the names of all of Adam's children. Here and there Augustine resorts to symbolic interpretations, errors of scribes, and intricacies of translation in an effort to get everything to fit, but, in the best tradition of Josephus, Augustine plays the dangerous game of tying the veracity of his religion to the veracity of its historical record, confident that no one can beat him at it.[18]

In the fading days of antiquity, one church father, Theodoret of Cyrrhus (c. 393–c. 460,) dotted his commentary on the first eight books of the Old Testament with occasional hints that there were anonymous authors. Most notably, he wrote of the book of Joshua that "the author, suspecting that some people might not trust his account, declared that he had found this in an ancient text. From this we conclude that the author of the book of Joshua lived in a subsequent age." But his peers let it pass. They were too busy with the dogmatic disputes of the time. Both Judaism and Christianity therefore entered the Middle Ages armed with a philosophical and historical framework sturdy enough to accommodate learned observations and overcome all public skepticism. If rabbi Abraham Ben Ezra (1092-1164) might call attention to six passages from the Pentateuch (*Beyond the Jordan . . . the mystery of the twelve . . . So Moses wrote the law . . . And the Canaanite was then in the Land . . . .In the mount where the Lord is seen . . . behold his bedstead was a bedstead of iron*), which implied that Moses could not have written them, this did not seem capable, even to him, of disturbing the overwhelming consensus that possessed multiple ways of explaining them away. Three hundred years later Alfonso Tostado (1400-1455), a learned Spanish bishop, called attention to one of the same passages and added one of his own, attributing both to Ezra, with nary a murmur from his cohorts. It was not, therefore, until the early seventeenth century that a small fraternity of scholars began to find such inconsistencies unacceptable.[19]

As I admitted in the first paragraph of this chapter, I do not presume to know why the ancients insisted on being so obtuse or why the early

moderns insisted on being so perverse. I can only compare the conceptual frameworks in which they functioned and then conclude by suggesting that there is a striking difference between the mental universe of the ancients and the dawning mental universe of the early moderns. For this purpose I must begin with the man who in some way presided over the beginnings of the scientific revolution, Marin Mersenne.

Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) was an extremely learned friar of the Minim order and mathematician who, from his convent in Paris, presided over a vast network of connections and correspondents throughout the world. An enemy of skepticism but no friend either of the philosophical *status quo*, Mersenne began as an Aristotelian but gradually developed into a promoter of the Copernican system, ready to adopt the arguments of Copernicus and Galileo, if not as definitive, at least as fruitful hypotheses. He was adamant in his search for truth, and he believed that the key lay in mathematics. But he was also acutely conscious of the limitations of human knowledge and never deviated from his Christian faith. René Descartes, another of his connections, was also a bit too presumptuous for Mersenne's pious taste. But, with an extremely open mind, he gathered around him a community of scholars with whom he did not necessarily agree and whose names read like a Who's Who of the scientific revolution.[20]

Still another member of Mersenne's circle was the Englishman Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Hobbes was a combination of personal timidity and philosophical radicalism. He was horrified by the clamor for limited government, which was increasing in England with the support of religious enthusiasts. While accompanying his student, Sir William Cavendish, on a grand tour of Europe, Hobbes got his first taste of the anti-Aristotelianism that was bubbling in the cauldrons of intellectual life. It was during the second of these tours, while accompanying another student, that Hobbes became acquainted with Mersenne and even more fascinated with the possibilities of mathematics and science. As far as religion was concerned, Hobbes was for all practical purposes an atheist. Certainly, throughout his entire life he never showed the remotest concern for the salvation of his soul. Yet Hobbes developed an extreme personal interest in religion. This was because the people whom Hobbes felt to be most dangerous to the stability of the state were constantly appealing to the biblical text as a justification for their stirring of the political waters.[21]

Around 1639 or 1640, as discontent in England was coming to a head, Hobbes composed his first systematic treatise on politics, the *Elements of Law*. In this work he demonstrated two characteristics that were to endure in all his subsequent writing. The first was a lack of respect for antiquity. To Hobbes all philosophers before him had got it wrong, and he was

particularly contemptuous of Aristotle, who in his mind had completely obscured both the physical sciences and political theory. For Aristotle's metaphysical approach, Hobbes substituted extreme nominalism. To him, there was no truth or falsehood in nature. There was only truth or falsehood in mathematical-like linguistic propositions. He thus proceeded by way of definition to demonstrate that political society was not a biological, not a natural, but a logical and human construct, the result of individuals preferring to surrender their natural right to do whatever they pleased in order to achieve a modicum of security. In such a logically constructed universe, moreover, there was no place for an independent biblical canon, with its claims to absolute truth. Thus, to a man like Hobbes, the question of who may or may not have written the Pentateuch was completely beside the point. It was the government that decided what was authoritative as Holy Writ. This was a Celsus with a punch, using the latest ideas to produce as bold and radical a dismissal of the biblical canon as had ever been devised. Yet Hobbes stopped short of discounting it entirely. It was too dangerous to be ignored. Thus he went on with a straight face to cite passage after passage from the Old and New Testaments which enjoined submission to the state. In other words, he had still not attempted, or perhaps even bothered, to dismember the text. But then, to him, only those parts that were consistent with his own logic had any claim to validity.[22]

Hobbes only circulated his *Elements of Law* in manuscript in England during the year 1640, but he became so fearful that his opinions would get him into trouble with the revolutionaries that he decided before the year was out to take refuge in Paris, where he found asylum in the congenial circle of Father Mersenne. It must have been there where he composed an expanded version of the most politically pertinent portions of the *Elements of Law*, which he dubbed *De Cive*. In this work Hobbes elaborates "On the state of Men Without Civil Society," going so far as to explicitly refer for the first time in his writings to a kind of political vacuum that he dubbed the "state of nature." Once again he finds it necessary to rebut the arguments of the religious fundamentalists in support of revolution, and once again he makes no attempt to discredit the text. In other words, his political theory had grown more inventive, but his religious apologetics had not. This manuscript was probably finished before the end of 1641 and, in spite of its making human reason the arbiter of revelation, the open-minded Father Mersenne was showing it around to his friends.[23]

Another member of Mersenne's circle was Isaac La Peyrère. La Peyrère was born in Bordeaux in 1596. I strongly suspect that he had a Judaeo-Iberian ancestor lurking somewhere in his past but that whatever purity of blood his forebears may have brought with them from the peninsula had

been further diluted by a century of intermarriage with the local Christians—this mixed heritage at least might explain the passion with which he always pursued his twin goal: (1) the conversion of the Jews and (2) their return to the Holy Land under the leadership of the king of France. Isaac's father was a lawyer and in 1596 his family were staunch Calvinists, or Huguenots. Isaac was also a questioning type. He tells us in the introduction to his *Systema Theologicum* that "I had this suspicion as a child, when I heard or read the history of Genesis, where Cain goes forth . . . where . . . away from his ancestors, he takes a wife and builds a city." He seems to have consumed his share of secular history too, noting, as Josephus did not, the claims of the Chaldeans and the Egyptians to a greater antiquity than all other peoples, and observing, which Josephus could not, the ships in the harbor of Bordeaux, floating proofs of distant lands and peoples largely ignored by the patriarchs. He claims he kept his silence, although sometime around 1626, when he was about thirty, he was accused of heresy before the Protestant synod, and it took the effort of sixty ministers to vouch for his orthodoxy.[24]

Around 1635, as he himself tells us in the same introduction, he underwent a special moment of illumination, reminiscent of Martin Luther's epiphany, while reading Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "As by one man sin entered into the world, so likewise death had power over all men. For till the time of the Law, sin was not imputed, when the Law was not. But death reigned from Adam into Moses, even upon those who had not sinned."[25] If, in other words, there was a time before Adam when sin was "not imputed," there must have been people in the world who were not sinning until such time as Jehovah stepped in to introduce a positive law. The stories in Genesis therefore, were part of a specific history of the Jews, not of mankind.

In 1640 La Peyrère went to Paris and entered the household of the king of France's cousin, Henry II, prince de Condé, who had also been born a Huguenot but had converted to Catholicism. It was on this occasion that La Peyrère also entered the circle of Father Mersenne, and it was in this innovative intellectual atmosphere that he seems to have written a controversial work that he ultimately titled *Preadamitae, sive Exercitatio*, an essay on his key verses of Paul's epistle, as well as *Du Rappel des Juifs*, expressing his desire for the conversion of the Jews as a prelude to the millennium. He even attempted to publish these writings, but Louis XIII's prime minister, Cardinal Richelieu, rejected the idea, and even after Richelieu's death La Peyrère was reduced to publishing only the second piece. Thus, though La Peyrère may have concocted his ideas in the relative isolation of Bordeaux, he developed them in the atmosphere of the budding scientific revolution.[26]

At this time, for example, it is interesting to see La Peyrère in his *Exercitatio* taking a disdainful attitude toward the ancients and specifically advancing his pre-Adamite theory as a hypothetical construct similar to Copernicanism. It is also interesting to speculate on the question of whether Hobbes and La Peyrère ever met. We have no evidence that they did, but it is no less interesting to note that in his same *Exercitatio*, when we find La Peyrère explaining the status of the Law among his pre-Adamites, we suddenly and unexpectedly encounter the term "state of nature."[27] In other words, La Peyrère's biblical criticism now seems to be informed by Hobbes' terminology. It is true that to La Peyrère the Law was divinely instituted by Jehovah and to Hobbes it was personally authorised by Adam. It is also true that neither Hobbes nor La Peyrère is as yet attempting to dismember the biblical text. But it cannot be denied that they are both beginning to confront it in a radical manner.

These were turbulent times in France. Both Cardinal Richelieu and his successor Cardinal Mazarin found themselves contending against domestic and foreign enemies. France, in alliance with the Dutch Republic and Sweden, was in the midst of the Thirty Years War against the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs, and after the death of Louis XIII in 1643 Mazarin had to run the government on behalf of a regent, Anne of Austria, and a child king, Louis XIV. But compared to England, where the years from 1642 to 1648 witnessed open civil war between the parliament and the king, the French monarchy was a paradise. During this period Hobbes seems to have participated fully in the activities of Mersenne's circle, criticizing the philosophy of Descartes, enjoying the publication of more editions of *De Cive*, and becoming the mathematics tutor of the expatriated Prince of Wales. These were halcyon days for La Peyrère as well. His patron was high in the councils of the regency, one mark of which being that in 1644 La Peyrère was sent to The Hague to accompany La Thuillerie, the French ambassador to the Dutch Republic, on a mission to stop an embarrassing war that had broken out between Denmark and France's ally Sweden. We know nothing about La Peyrère's official duties on this mission, but we do know that he exploited it to cultivate his passion for the pre-Adamites.[28]

His first opportunity came at The Hague, where he either renewed his acquaintance with or became acquainted with one of Mersenne's correspondents, a certain Claude de Saumaise. Saumaise was a convert from Catholicism to Protestantism who for this reason had abandoned a career in law in his native France for a prestigious professorship at the University of Leyden. There, among other things, he took up the study of ancient astronomy and astrology in an effort to demonstrate that whereas astronomy was a science worthy of a Christian, astrology was not. He

must have spent a good deal of time simply composing his *magnum opus* because it stretches to 876 pages, not even including the prefatory material. It finally came out in 1648 under the title of *Annis Climacteris*. In it he demonstrates great respect for ancient Chaldean, Egyptian, and Greek astronomy, confidently repeating accounts that the Chaldeans had been observing the stars for more than 473,000 years. He also maintained that the modest claims of Chaldean astrology were completely blown out of proportion by the Romans, Arabs, and moderns. He further indicated that he had long shared his ideas with the French ambassador La Thuillerie and dedicated the book to him. La Peyrère enters into this picture, because he was to borrow material from the *Annis Climacteris* and go as far as to claim that he could not have proven his theories without Saumaise. When the embassy moved on to Denmark, La Peyrère found more grist for his mill. There he met with the Danish scholar Ole Worm and informed himself about the aborigines of Iceland and Greenland, who, La Peyrère surmised, could not have spread out from the garden of Eden. The mission also moved on to Sweden, where La Peyrère probably met the young Queen Christina, another unconventional thinker if there ever was one.[29]

La Peyrère returned to Paris at the end of 1646, only to find that his patron the Prince de Condé was reaching the end of his life. His death on December 26, however, did not stop La Peyrère's connection with the Condé clan, La Peyrère immediately assuming similar duties in the entourage of Condé's eldest son, Louis II, Prince de Condé, who was a young military genius and even more indispensable to the government. Nor did La Peyrère interrupt his scholarly activity. Soon after his return, he published a *Relation du Groenland*, making his case for the antiquity of its original inhabitants. The work was dedicated to the new prince and expressed appreciation to the librarian of Cardinal Mazarin. When, moreover, the prince gained a resounding victory over the Spanish at Lens in 1648, La Peyrère was quick to come out with an account and description.[30]

The domestic situation in France however, quickly changed. A revolt that became known as the Fronde broke out against the policies of Mazarin. For Thomas Hobbes, who had fled to France in order to escape one revolution, the coming of the Fronde must have confirmed his worst nightmares, and his first reaction, as it always seemed to be, was to write. On this occasion, he composed his most encompassing, methodical, and systematic exposition of his theory of knowledge, politics, and religion, the *Leviathan*. He begins with a purely materialistic interpretation of the world and then fully expounds his theory of the state of nature, social contract, and submission to the state. But perhaps the most remarkable

aspect of the *Leviathan* is that for the first time in his own writings, indeed for the first time in all history, we have a full-blown textual attack on the authorship of the Pentateuch and other books of the biblical canon, concluding with a tirade against the ancients *in generalibus*. "There is scarce any of those old writers," he gloats, "that contradicteth not sometimes both himself and others; which makes their testimony insufficient."[31]

For La Peyrère the Fronde was an even more intimate experience. During its course Cardinal Mazarin became suspicious of the Prince de Condé, imprisoned him, then was forced to release him and himself go into exile. For a short period Condé's star was in the ascendant, then it fell, Mazarin returned, and Condé withdrew to the Spanish Low Countries, where he offered his services to the enemies of France. As long as the prince was in France, La Peyrère continued to pursue his intellectual passions, and in a manner very similar to Hobbes. He picked up the pieces of his earlier *Exercitatio* on the Epistle to the Romans and expanded it into a much more complete exposition, which he titled the *Systema theologicum ex pre-Adamitae hypothesi*. He begins, as the title suggests, by recapitulating his previous insights on the epistle and then expands on it. He seems to be aware, for example, that his explanation of the sin of Adam bringing death into the world left something to be desired, and he hurries to specify that the pre-Adamites died, but they did not die *spiritually*. It is not, however, until the third book that the new features of the work begin to emerge. First, he tackles the problem of Cain. He implicitly rejects the explanations of Philo and Augustine. It is not written, La Peyrère concludes, that Adam begat either sons or daughters from the time of the birth of Abel to the time of Cain. It is also apparent that La Peyrère has come out of his meetings with Saumaise with the entire text of the *Annis Climacteris* in his hands. His description of the antiquity of Chaldean and Egyptian astronomy employs exactly the same terms and examples, and he repeatedly cites the *Annis Climacteris* and its author. The climax, however, emerges in the fourth book, for there, for the first time in his writings, La Peyrère launches into a direct attack on the authorship of the biblical canon. God reveals himself to man very obscurely, La Peyrère insists. Adam could not have known astronomy. La Peyrère points to numerous anachronisms and misplacements in the Pentateuch and in other books of the Bible. All of this, of course, while loudly proclaiming his faith.[32]

If we but pause for a moment to let the content of the last two paragraphs sink in, I do not see how we can help but be astonished! Here after some two thousand years of lackadaisical skepticism repeatedly quashed by the champions of orthodoxy, two individuals, operating in the same intellectual circle but with little apparent contact with each other, suddenly come up with a concerted, direct, and systematic attack on the

authenticity of the biblical canon. Is this an accident of history? Or is there some relationship between this coincidence and the fact that, after some two thousand years of Hippocratic medicine, one brief generation before Thomas Hobbes and Isaac La Peyrère, William Harvey begins looking at the heart as pump and concludes that it cannot arithmetically be manufacturing so much blood, or that after some two thousand years of Pythagorean and Euclidean geometry, one brief generation after Hobbes and La Peyrère, both Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz and Isaac Newton came up with the invention of calculus? It is extremely difficult to exclude the thought that some crazy new spirit is circulating in the intellectual world.

The new spirit aside, however, there is still one more mystery to solve, if one considers the specific examples advanced by Hobbes and La Peyrère in order to attack the authenticity of the biblical canon.

In the case of Hobbes, he begins by citing Deuteronomy 34:6 concerning the sepulcher of Moses to the effect "that no man knoweth of his sepulchre to this day." Then, to counter the rabbinical excuse that these lines were written by Joshua, Hobbes moves on to Genesis 12:6 to the effect that when "Abraham passed through the land to the place of Sichem . . . the Canaanite was then in the land," a statement that implies, of course, that the Canaanites were no longer there at the time of writing. Further, Hobbes cites Numbers 21;14, where the author claims to have taken his information from a source entitled *The Book of the Wars of the Lord*, which contained the acts of Moses as well as details that could only have been known after his death. The only Law given by Moses, Hobbes concludes, were the laws briefly described in Deuteronomy 11 and 27, which were also commanded to be written on stones upon entering Canaan. The implication is clear, though Hobbes does not make it explicit, that the entire Pentateuch could never have been inscribed in stone, much less schlepped by the ancient Hebrews inside the Arc of the Covenant. From there Hobbes moves on to the other books of the Old Testament, citing passages that demonstrated that they were compiled after the captivity, mainly by Ezra, and attributing the compilation of the New Testament to the Church Fathers.[33]

In the case of La Peyrère, he begins his exposition, for some reason, with the books of Joshua, Chronicles, and Kings, but his point is the same as Hobbes', namely, that they are compilations. La Peyrère then goes on to the putatively self-described death of Moses and punctuates it with the putatively self-described death of Joshua in *Joshua* 24:20. Particularly striking, however, is La Peyrère's citation of the beginning of *Deuteronomy*, which has Moses speaking from "beyond the Jordan," a river he never crossed, an example that Hobbes appears to have overlooked. Like

Hobbes, La Peyrère catches the Numbers 21:24 citation to *The Book of the Wars of the Lord*, but La Peyrère again distinguishes himself from his English counterpart by noting the reference in Deuteronomy 3:14, where Jair possessed a country that was named after him "to this day," and earlier in verse 11, where the iron bed of a long-dead king of Bashan could still be viewed by tourists. Citing even more similar examples, La Peyrère finally abandons the effort, feeling that he has made his point.

The mystery is this: How did La Peyrère and Hobbes manage to come up with such similar but not identical references? I can *begin* to resolve it by noting that both Hobbes and La Peyrère are raking up a number of their objections from antiquity. What is happening here, however, is that the old answers to these objections are no longer deemed satisfactory. Jehovah, for some reason or other, is being held to a different—notice I do not say higher—standard. If He could not come up with a more sophisticated Bible, He must have been treating his prophets like children, and the prophets of the mid-seventeenth century refused to be treated as such. But even more mysteriously, we must note that two of Hobbes' examples (the content of the Mosaic Law and the Canaanite in the land) and at least one of La Peyrère's (Beyond the Jordan, since I cannot exclude that he *may* have gotten two of his examples out of Tostado) are not out of antiquity but out of the medieval rabbi Abraham Ben Ezra. The question thus emerges: How did Thomas Hobbes and Isaac La Peyrère, neither of whom knew Hebrew and may not even have known each other, manage to come up at the same time with at least three and probably four *different* examples from the *same* esoteric source?

If I could conclusively resolve this mystery, I might indeed be worthy of my participation in the present apotheosis of Professor Harold Drake. But, like Anatole France's Jongleur de Notre Dame, I can only deploy my limited talents *ad maiorem Draci gloriam* by throwing two other names into the air, that of a certain Louis Cappel (1585-1658) and that of a certain Jean Morin (1591-1659), praying that as a result all of the other evidence that I have been juggling will not come tumbling down. Cappel was another Huguenot savant, a professor of Hebrew at the University of Saumur. In 1624 he published anonymously in Leyden a learned tome, the *Arcanum Punctationis Revelatum,* in which he demonstrated that the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament had consisted originally only in consonants and that the little punctuation marks for the vowels that appeared in most manuscripts had only been added during the Christian era by the Hebrew Masoretic copyists. It was not the kind of observation to give pause to a medieval rabbi, but in the atmosphere of the mid-seventeenth century it was an alarming crack in the integrity of the text. Jean Morin, in comparison, was an ex-Huguenot savant turned Catholic

priest who had devoted his life to the study of the Samaritan Pentateuch, which, he concluded, was superior to the Hebrew text. And while Morin was doing his bit of mischief, Cappel had continued his own researches on the Hebrew texts and discovered a large number of errors and variations that could only be corrected through conjectures and comparisons. He experienced some difficulty in getting this work, the *Critica Sacra,* published, and he only managed to do so with the help of Morin. When and where did they manage to pull it off? In 1650 in Paris, at the same time, in other words, when Thomas Hobbes and Isaac La Peyrère were producing their first dismemberment of the biblical canon. I venture to suggest, therefore, if my balls are still up in the air, that if there was anyone around in Paris at mid-century who might have been in a position to alert Thomas Hobbes and Isaac La Peyrère to some of the finer points of rabbinical commentary, it was either Jean Morin, Louis Cappel, or both. There is evidence that La Peyrère consulted Cappel. He said so himself in his *Reponse de La Peyrère aux calomnies de Desmarais*. There is also evidence that Morin was part of Mersenne's circle and that Morin's congregation, the Oratory, possessed a rare manuscript of Ben Ezra's *Commentary on the Pentateuch*. This is what leads me to conclude that Hobbes and La Peyrère talked to Cappel, Morin, or both independently, each one of them coming out of the meetings with a different set of notes.[34]

Neither Hobbes nor La Peyrère, however, tarried long in France. Cromwell having reestablished order, in 1652 Hobbes returned to England, happy to submit to whatever form of government could keep him safe. As for La Peyrère, he had barely finished a draft of the first part of his *Systema theologicum* before he was forced to leave his manuscripts behind in France in order to follow his patron into exile. In the Low Countries Condé and La Peyrère lived the lives of expatriates. Condé sent La Peyrère on missions to Spain and England, but no mere revolution could interrupt La Peyrère's millenarian project. He retrieved his manuscripts and, with the apparent support of another expatriate, the abdicated Queen Christina of Sweden, he attempted to publish them in the neighboring Dutch Republic. Apparently La Peyrère had two manuscripts with him, the *Preadamitae sive Exercitatio* and the first part of the *Systema theologicum*, to which he appended a fresh appeal to the Jews, which promised them a forthcoming second part, and he made arrangements for the manuscripts to be published by the prestigious house of Elzevier. Some six months after La Peyrère returned to the Spanish Low Countries, Elzevier published them, without revealing the author. They created an immediate scandal. The States General of the Dutch Republic and the States of Holland condemned the work, and as soon as the bishop of Namur in the Spanish Low Countries found out

about the publication, he too condemned it and, attributing the work to La Peyrère, had him arrested.[35]

The careers of both Hobbes and La Peyrère are even more instructive if one compares them to the career of the next champion of seventeenth-century biblical criticism, Benedict Spinoza. Spinoza was born into the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam in 1632 and by the time he was twenty-three, and in the same year of La Peyrère's appearance at The Hague, Spinoza himself was in trouble with the Sanhedrin of his city, accused of materialism and "contempt for the Torah." It is not impossible that La Peyrère and Spinoza met during La Peyrère's brief sojourn in the Dutch Republic, but we do not need to posit such a meeting, for we know that Spinoza had a copy in his library not only of Hobbes' *De Cive* but also of the *Preadamitae*. Spinoza was also fascinated with Cartesianism, which did not prevent him from going beyond it in many respects. And like Hobbes, Spinoza did not like either revolutions or the kind of biblical exegesis that justified them. In 1665 he began writing his *Tractatus,* which was prefaced, not surprisingly, with the claim that "Scripture leaves reason absolutely free." In beginning this work he displayed a great sense of distance from the Hebrew patriarchs, whom he insisted, like Galileo before him, could only interpret their world with the limited knowledge at their disposal. In the main body of the work, moreover, Spinoza embarked on a whole program of biblical analysis that would have put Hobbes and La Peyrère to shame. He specifically begins with Ben Ezra's five cryptic examples, identifies them, and then goes on, deploying his familial knowledge of Hebrew and piling anachronism upon anachronism, to demonstrate that the Pentateuch is not to be relied upon. As he puts it:

> If anyone pays attention to the way in which all the histories and precepts in these five books are told promiscuously and without order, with no regard for dates; and further, how the same story is often repeated, sometimes in a different version, he will easily discern how they were all promiscuously collected and conserved in order that they might subsequently be examined and put in order more easily.

The ABD who never, so to speak, finished his dissertation was Ezra, and Spinoza extends a similar analysis to the entire Old Testament canon. His ultimate purpose was to base political theory on a Hobbesian state of nature, in this case for the benefit of the existing regime in the Dutch Republic, which was under constant criticism from its religious right for its policy of relative toleration.[36]

Whereas Hobbes passed the remainder of his life in England, attaining a good measure of the peace and reputation that he had always desired, La Peyrère's immediate future proved to be considerably more picaresque. After six months in prison, he thought it best to become a Catholic and even wrote to Pope Alexander VII, offering his submission and trying to enlist him in the crusade to convert the Jews. La Peyrère even descended on the pope in Rome, where he made his formal abjuration. He explained his conversion in his *Epistolae ad Philotimae,* attributing his errors largely to his Protestant upbringing. Finally, in 1659, a peace between France and Spain ended his own and his patron's precarious wanderings. Condé returned to grace at the court of Louis XIV, and La Peyrère followed him as his librarian. In later life La Peyrère behaved with a little more circumspection, but he never gave up his belief in his pre-Adamites. He continued his writing, trying to convert a fellow Protestant, justifying his own conduct, and continuing his enthusiasm for the conversion of the Jews.[37]

In 1665 La Peyrère retired to Aubervilliers, where he joined the Oratorian seminary there as a lay member, and it is probably during this period of his life that he made contact with Richard Simon, the last great luminary of the seventeenth-century biblical revolution. Simon never took La Peyrère very seriously, possibly because Simon was infinitely more learned than La Peyrère, but after La Peyrère's death in 1676 Simon did write a kind of obituary in which he made every effort to distance himself from La Peyrère's more eccentric ideas. Nevertheless, Simon was no less radical in his approach, as is evident from his controversial *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*. He begins it innocently enough with the assertion that from the time of Moses the Hebrews had public writers and that Moses, as well as the great prophets, employed these to help write the books of the Old Testament. But Simon continues more alarmingly by adding that these amanuenses and their successors kept adding to the original texts, which explains the doublings, discrepancies, and post-mortem observations. He gladly embraces the proposition that the canon was compiled primarily by Ezra, who also added a few touches of his own. By the time he is finished, Simon has made such a shambles out of the biblical text that one wonders what there is left to rely on; yet he uses these shambles in order to argue that tradition, not the canon, had always been the principal foundation for both Judaism and Christianity and that this argument demonstrated the orthodoxy of the Catholic, as opposed to the Protestant, religion. Like Philo, Simon seems completely unaware of the perils of his argument in the hands of the unbelievers. But what is especially interesting to me, in terms of the question I have been pursuing, is what he tells us in his preface about his opinion of the ancients:

> Those who seek the truth for itself and without preconceptions do not stop at names or antiquity, particularly when it is not a matter of faith. And it is certain that most of the Fathers did not have all the necessary resources nor the time to investigate the great difficulties in Scripture.

For all his caution and his good intentions, the moment Simon's manuscript was published in France in 1678 it was immediately suppressed, but the stubborn Simon, succeeded, after a number of adventures, in having the original version republished in the Dutch Republic in 1680. Thus, by the end of the seventeenth century, the dike had broken.[38]

The various members of Mersenne's circle, of course, each had different tendencies. Mersenne's faith always came first. He never lost sight of the gulf that separated the mysteries of religion from the faculties, no matter how improved through mathematical analysis, of mere humans. Descartes was the most presumptuous, with an immense confidence in the capacity of human reason to replicate the mind of God. Hobbes, an atheist posing as an Anglican, was as suspicious of the mysteries of religion as he was confident of his own logic. La Peyrère was a millenarian, who demanded clarity and consistency from the biblical canon and found in Hobbes, Saumaise, Worm, and Cappel a means to fulfill prophecy. Beyond Mersenne's circle, we see that Descartes, Hobbes, and La Peyrère begat Spinoza, and that Richard Simon tried desperately to conscript their findings into the service of Catholic orthodoxy. But of one thing there is no doubt. Both the scientific and the biblical revolution were hatched in the same ideological nest.

If we now go back to my insolent question as to why the ancients insisted on being so obtuse and the early moderns so perverse, I can only repeat that I do not presume to know, but I do believe that there emerges from the comparisons I have made a more modest proposition, namely, that there is one clear distinction between the mentality of the ancients and the mental attitudes of the early moderns. The ancients, as I think I have demonstrated, were not unmindful of the contradictions in the biblical canon, but what seemed to override their doubts was a powerful veneration for its antiquity. In the words of two modern scholars: "No literature has ever been copied with such scrupulous fidelity as the Old Testament."[39] The sense that there had existed a sanctified wisdom that towered over the knowledge of their own times preempted the mentality of the Judaeo-pagan-Christian world. Ezra believed this, Livy believed this, Philo and Josephus believed it, Celsus and Porphyry believed it, Jerome and Augustine believed it. What the savants of the early

seventeenth century exhibited was the exact opposite of this mentality. They had all come to the conclusion that it was the ancients who had been ignorant, that if the author of the Pentateuch did not explain where Cain got his wife, it was because he was not thinking clearly, so this was no firm foundation upon which to base one's physics, one's astronomy, one's political theory, or even one's religious faith. The clarity of one's ideas now emerged as the *criterium veritatis*. Mersenne believed this, Descartes believed this, La Peyrère believed this, Hobbes believed this, Spinoza believed this, even Simon believed it.

It might seem as if my thesis is contradicted by the lonely figure of Thucydides, who, I must admit, did his best to debunk the notion that the old wars were the best. But Thucydides, as I have already suggested, was a voice crying in the wilderness of Hellenistic Roman historiography, besides which, as much as Thucydides may have been a fan of civilization over primitivism, he was perfectly aware that civilization was fragile. It depended, as did the Athenian empire, on the genius of individuals like Themistocles or Pericles to maintain itself. The vision of the founders of the scientific revolution was much more general. As Descartes wrote: "Good sense is shared by all. " And he, like many members of the Mersenne group, were envisioning a method of reasoning for all men to follow which would make men, in Descartes' own phrase, "the masters and possessors of nature."[40] Whether the way they were thinking will eventually result in a planet of the apes is another matter entirely.

NOTES

1. Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science: 1300-1800* (London, 1949). Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1972).
2. For the origins of the JEDP hypothesis, see Jean Astruc, *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroit que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Génèse: Avec des remarques qui appuient cet éclaircissement* (Brussels, 1753), and Julius Wellhausen, *Geschichte Israels,* 2 vols. (Berlin, 1878).
3. Jeremiah 52:13. See also II Kings 25:9 and II Chronicles 36:19. For the "fool," Psalm 14 and its analogue Psalm 53 on the fool have a very exilic sound to them and seem like the exact reverse of the second Isaiah. Consider the word ש נ ף ת, captivity, in the last verse. For Ezra's credentials, see Ezra 7:11."Copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel," 7:14, "Forasmuch as thou are sent of the king, and of his seven counselors to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand, " 7:25 "And thou Ezra, after the wisdom, of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the

laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not." For the revival meeting, see Nehemiah 8.

4. Compare Dionysius, *Roman Antiquities* 5.29 with Livy, *History* 2.13
5. *De posteritate Caeni*. The cited passages are in I and XI.
6. Petronius: *Jewish War* 2.10.5. Cain's wife: *Jewish Antiquities* (hereafter *JA*) 1.3.1-2. Death of Moses: *JA* 4..8.39. Ezra: *JA*. 11.5.1-5, where Josephus reproduces the letter of Artaxerxes from Ezra 7:11-26. In rendering διαφωνίας in *Against Apion* (hereafter *AA*) 1.2 as "inconsistencies," διδάσκον " in *AA*, 1.3 pluralised as "discrepancies," and αναγράφάς in *AA* 1.4 as "official records," I am adhering to the Loeb translation. Superiority of Jewish records: *AA* 1.6-7.
7. *AA* 2.38
8. For the dating of II Esdras, 3-14, see the Jewish Encyclopaedia article, "Esdras. Books of." For the cited passages, see II Esdras , 8:1 and 14: 21
9. II Esdras, 14:22
10. Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1. Cf. *Babylonian Talmud,* Sanhedrin 90a.
11. Tosefta, Sanhedrin 4:7. ש נ ה is "changed." Cf. *Babylonian Talmud,* Sanhedrin 21b. See also David, Halivni, *Peshat and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis* (New York, 1991), chap. 5.
12. *Babylonian Talmud,* Baba Bathra 14b-15a. See also in this same 15a, where Moses is in tears in anticipation of his own death.
13. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.21, referring to Tatian and Cassian. Ibid. 3.16, citing II Esdras 5:35, well within the boundaries of the original pseudo-Ezdra. Tertullian, *De habitu mulieb*, chap. 3: "Hierosolymis, Babylonia expurgatione deletis, omne instrumentum Judaica literaturae per Esdram constat restauratom."
14. Origen, *Contra Celsus*. Antisocial: 1.1; Barbaric: 1.2 ; Anti-intellectual: 1.9 and 13; Cricicism of Moses: 1.14 and 16-17; Eternity of world: 1.19; Jesus' paternity: 1.21-23; Demons: 8.14; Hobbesian passage: 8.38; responses by Origen, passim.
15. *Saint Jerome's Commentary on Daniel*, transl. Gleason Archer (Grand Rapids, 1958). As I look at Adolf von Harnack's reconstructions in *Porphyrius: "Gegen die Christen,, 15 Bücher Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate (*Berlin, 1916), I am struck by the fact that his reconstruction of Porphyry includes many passages in which the author does not specifically cite Porphyry, notably, for example, the attribution to Porphyry by Harnack of the passage about the burning of the Torah, which seems contradicted by Porphyry's other statements. I am thankful to Professor Aaron Johnson, a learned Porphyry scholar, for providing me with a list of such contradictions.
16. For the quotes: *Apokriticus* 3.3 and 3.10. ἀποσώξεταί is "preserved." με όλοι ακρίβεια is "with all accuracy" and τὰ αὐτά is "the same things." I am thankful to Professor Apostolos Athanassakis, the distinguished classicist, for his advice on my translations from the Greek. On the identity of the Greek, see Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, "Porphyry, Julian, or Hierokles? The Anomymous Hellene in Makarios Magnés *Apokritikos,*" *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 53 (2) (October, 2002): 466-502.

17. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel.* See esp. books 7 and 10. Book 9.41 cites Daniel 4:30. Jerome, *The Perpetual Virginity of Mary*, chap. 8. See also his *Commentary on Daniel,* fully cited in note 15.
18. Augustine, *City of God.* See esp. book 5, and for the cited passage, book 15.8
19. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *The Questions on the Octateuch.* Joshua , Question 14. Abraham Ben Ezra seems to have been alluding to Deuteronomy 1:1, Deuteronomy 27, and Joshua 8:32, Deuteronomy 31:9. Genesis 12:6, Genesis 22:14, and Deuteronomy 3:11. See his *Commentary on the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy* (Devarim), chap. 1. Alfonso Tostado, *Opus super Deuteronomium* (Venice, 1528), cites Deuteronomy 3:11, to which he added 3:14.
20. Compare Marin Mersenne, *Quaestiones celeberrimae in Genesum* (Paris, 1623), in which he is skeptical of the theories of Copernicus and his followers, with *L'impiété des Déistes*, (Paris, 1624) 2:174-201, where he begins to appreciate them as useful mathematical hypotheses, and with his *Les mechaniques de Galilée, mathématicien et ingénieur du Duc de Florence* (Paris, 1634) and *Les nouvelles pensées de Galilée* (Paris, 1638-1639). See also Robert Lenoble, *Mersenne et la naissance du mécanisme* (Paris, 1943).
21. For Hobbes' first grand tour, accompanying Sir William Cavendish, later second earl of Devonshire, see Linda Levy Peck, "Hobbes on the Grand Tour: Paris, Venice, or London," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57 (1996): 177-183, who penetratingly moves the date from 1610-1613 to 1614-1615. For the second tour: 1629-1630, accompanying Gervaise Clifton, see *Thomae Hobbesii Malbmesburiensis Vita (THMV)* (London, 1679), 5-6 For the third tour: 1634-1645, accompanying the now-deceased second earl's son, William, now third earl, see British Library, Additional Manuscripts 70499, fols. 200-203, Hobbes (own-hand letter sent) to William Cavendish, earl of Newcastle, Paris, June 13/23, 1636), published in *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford, 1994) 1:32-33.
22. *Elements of Law,* part 1, chap. 1: "As the writings of men from antiquity downward have still increased, so also have the doubts and controversies . . . And seeing that true knowledge begetteth not doubt . . . but knowledge, it is evident . . . that they which have heretofore written thereof have not well understood their own subject." Ibid., part 1, chap. 5: "For true and false are things not incident to beasts, because they adhere[not] to propositions and language; nor have they ratiocination, whereby to multiply one untruth by another; as men have." Hobbes dedicated the *Elements of Law* to William Cavendish, earl of Newcastle, on May 9, 1640, but only truncated editions were published during his lifetime.
23. For his motives in leaving England and his association with Mersenne, see *THMV,* 6, 13-14. See also Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), Nouvelles acquisitions françaises 6205, fols. 177-182, Baptiste Masoyer-Deshommeaux (own-hand letter sent) to Mersenne, September 10, 1642; BNF Ms. latin 10352, part 1, fols. 49-50, Samuel Sorbière (copy) to Thomas Martel, February 1, 1643 (published in Mersenne, *Correspondance,* ed. Paul Tannery et. al. (Paris, 1933–) 11:259-265 and 12:36-37). *Elementorum Philosophiae, sectio tertia, de cive* (Paris, 1642). See chap 1.

24. *Systema theologicum ex Praeadamitarum hypothesi:* fully cited in note 35**,** Proemium "Illa eadem et mihi olim inciderat suspicio; cum puer adhuc vel audirem, vel legerem historiam Geneseos. Vbi Cainus foras egreditur . . . ubi . . . longe a patribus suis uxorem ducit, et civitatem aedificat." For La Peyrère's embarrassments, see BNF Ms. français 15827, fols. 149, 162.
25. Romans 5:12-14
26. We first hear of La Peyrère's writing on the pre-Adamites in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Coll. Latina 6471, Naudé to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, [1641] but it is impossible to determine its extent at this time. Either La Peyrère himself or Mersenne sent what appears to be a complete version of this writing to Hugo Grotius, who published a rebuttal to its thesis entitled *Dissertatio altera de origine gentivm Americarvm adversus obtrectatorem* (1643). Grotius took the position that the Americans were originally Norwegians, and he ridiculed the idea that "aliquos ante Adamum fuisse conditos homines, ut nuper aliquis in Gallia somniavit" (p. 13). We have another description of La Peyrère's writing in Bibliotheek van de Universiteit Leiden (BUL) Bibliotheca Publica Latina (*BPL*) 275, fol. 110, Mersenne (own-hand letter sent) to André Rivet, November 7, 1643 (published in Mersenne, *Correspondence,* 12:362-365). The writing in question appear to be the bulk of the later *Preeadamitae sive Exercitatio super versibus duodecimo, decimotertio, et decimoquarto, capitis quinti Epistolae D. Pauli ad Romanos quibus inductuntur Primi Homine ante Adamum conditi.* (*Exercitatio*), fully cited in note 35. See also *Du Rappel des Juifs* (Paris, 1643). For my analysis of La Peyrère's life and work, I owe a great deal to Jean Paul Oddos' unpublished thesis *Recherches sur la vie et l'oeuvre d'Isaac Laperere (1596-1676)* Université des Sciences Sociales, Grenoble II, which I can only access through Richard Popkin's *Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676) His Life, Work, and Influence* (Leyden, 1987). What I attempt to add to these ground-breaking researches is the chronology of La Peyrère's writing so as to distinguish the content and date of composition of the *Exercitatio* from the content and date of composition of the *Systema theologicum*, which also permits me to establish the close conjunction between Hobbes' and La Peyrère's critiques of the authorship of the Pentateuch and opens the problem of how to explain it.
27. *Exercitatio*, chap. 8: Neque rursus illud me latuit, quam male multatus fuerit ille apud veteres, qui demonstrabat, homines esse Antipodas, et hemisphaeria ad diametros nostri Orbis opposita. Metuendum nempe mihi fuisset temporibus illis antiquis et rigidis, neque felicius mihi cessisset nova tempora cogitanti, quam infeliciter cesserat novo ille Cosmographo, novos Mundos indaganti. *At certe, nunc non est ut et olim fuit* [italics mine] . . . Sive enim coelos credimus circumagi, sive terram existimamus subverti; succedunt nihilo minus vice perpetua, et dies nocti, et diei nox . . . Pari eventu, sive credimus Adamum fuisse creatum solum, et primum omnium hominum. sive ponimus alios homines ante Adamum fuisse genitos; stabit semper suo loco, et suis mysteriis religio omnis Christiana. Chap. 18: Vivebam ego quondam sub *statu* illo *naturae* [italics mine] **. . .** absque lege Dei.
28. *Elementa Philosophica, de cive* (Amsterdam, 1647). There were three editions of the same year, two very similar, and a third with some additional material. It is

important to note the changes in the title from the first edition, cited in note 23, because this helps us to determine that Spinoza owned one of the 1647 editions, as is evident from the spelling of the title in his inventory after decease, cited in note 36.

29. *De Annis Climacteris et Antiqua Astrologia Diatribae* (Leyden, 1648): Praefatio ad Lectorum "Chaldei mundum ab eterrno decebant fuisse. Observationem quam fecerant siderum ad hominem fata praenotada tam antiquam esse jactabant, ut ad quadrigenta & septuaginta tria millia annorum numeraent ex quo siderali scientia observationibus//inde continuis operam dare coepissent usq~ ad Alexandri in Asiam expeditionem, ut auctor est Diodorus lib. II Bibliothecae." The reference is to Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, 2:30-31, who, however, is skeptical about these claims. La Peyrère finished his *Relation de l'Islande*, which he wrote in the form of a letter to his friend, the illustrious François de La Mothe-Le Vayer, in Copenhagen by December 18, 1644. In it La Peyrère maintained that "Les Annales de l'Islande Payene, n'ont pas de date, et sont d'un temps indéfini" (pp. 94-95). He only published this letter, to which he added a dedication to the Prince de Condé, in Paris in 1663. La Peyrère finished his *Relation du Groenland*, also for La Mothe-Le Vayer, at The Hague by June 16, 1646. La Peyrère says of the aborigines, "Ces peuples sont gouvernez par divers Seigneurs, dont les Norvegues n'ont point de connoissance" (p. 52), and "le language de ces Sauvages estoit si different de celuy de ce monde que les Danois et les Norveges n'y pouvoient rien comprendre" (pp. 203-204).
30. Return of La Peyrère: BUL *BPL* 275, fols. 91-92, Mersenne to Rivet, October 18, 1646 (published in Mersenne *Correspondance*, 14:549-554), announcing that La Peyrère had returned "depuis peu de jours." The printing of the *Relation du Groenland* was completed in Paris on April 30, 1647 (Paris, 1647). *Battaille de Lents* (Paris, 1649).
31. He must have written the *Leviathan* in France because it was published in England in 1651. For the cited passage, see *Leviathan*: A Review, and Conclusion
32. *Systema theologicum ex Praeadamitarum hypothesi*, fully cited in note 35. La Peyrère later claimed that Saumaise had been its midwife. See La Peyrère's *Lettre a Philibert de La Mare,* cited in note 37.
33. *Leviathan*, part 3, chap. 33: Of the Number, Antiquity, Scope, Authority, and Interpreters of the Books of Holy Scripture.
34. *Arcanum Punctationis Revelatum* (Leyden, 1624), *Ludovici Cappelli Critica sacra, sive de variis quae in Sacris Veteris Testamenti libris occurunt lectionibus libri sex, edita in lucem studio et opera Iohannis Cappelli* (Paris, 1650). Jean Morin, *Exercitationes ecclesiasticae in utrumque Samaritanorum Pentateuchum* (1631); BUL, *BPL* 275, fol. 17, Mersenne (own-hand letter sent) to André Rivet, February 8, 1634, mentioning one of Morin's works (published in Mersenne *Correspondence* 4:34-38). It should be noted that other references to a Morin in the index of this correspondence refer to Jean-Baptiste Morin, an astronomer-astrologer. For La Peyrère's response to Des Marais, see note 38. Interestingly, the Jesuit Jacques Sirmond published a Latin translation of Theodoret's collected works in Paris in 1642. We learn that the Oratory possessed a manuscript of Ibn

Ezra from Richard Simon's *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, fully cited in note 38. See, in any edition, the "Catalogue des Auteurs Juifs," Entry: "Aben Esra." As for Alfonso Tostado, whose reference to Deuteronomy 3:14, La Peyrère also employs, his works were readily available in Paris, since Simon cites him in the *Histoire critique,* chap. 12.

35. On leaving his manuscripts behind, see his letter to Alexander appended to the *Epistolae ad Philotimae*, cited below in note 37. Mission to Spain in 1653, described by La Peyrère himself: France, Archives Condé (AC) *P* 15, fols. 347-354. Presence in England, reported by French ambassador: France, Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance Politique (AAECP) Angleterre 62, fols. 409-412, Bordeaux to Brienne, March 2, 1654. Arrival in The Hague, reported by French ambassador: AAECP Hollande 55, fols, 36-37, Chanut to Brienne, February 4, 1655. La Peyrère claimed, in his letter to Alexander VII, that he, La Peyrère, had extracted from the publisher a promise not to publish the book in the Spanish Low Countries. The three items were published by Elzevier under the titles: *Preadamitae sive Exercitatio super versibus duodecimo, decimotertio, et decimoquarto, capitis quinti Epistolae D. Pauli ad Romanos quibus inducuntur Primi Homine ante Adamum conditi; Systema theologicum ex Praeadamitarum hypothesi*; and *Synagogis Judaeorum universis quotquot sunt per totum terrarum orbem sparsae* (Amsterdam, 1655). Elzevier published all three items in 4^{o}- 8^{o} and 12^{o}. The promised second part of the *Systema* seems to have ended up as *Des Iuifs, Elus, Reietés, et Rapelés*, cited in note 38. The condemnations by the States General and States of Holland were both dated November 26, 1655, and published in The Hague the same year, which may explain the quick publication of the same items without the Elzevier imprint. The first two works were quickly translated into English and published in England in 1656 and 1655, respectively. La Peyrère described his arrest in his letter to Alexander VII, appended to the *Epistolae ad Philotima,e* cited in note 37.
36. See the excommunication decree (July 17, 1656) in Jacob Freudenthal, *Die Lehensgeschicte Spinozas in Quellenschriften* (Leipzig, 1899), 114-116. For Spinoza's library, see his inventory after decease in The Hague, Gemeente Archief, Notariële Akten 850, Willem van den Hove, March 2, 1677. "In Quarto," Item 28, is "Praeadamitae. 1655," which suggests that Spinoza had rushed to obtain one of the Elzevier editions hot off the press. "In 12^{o}" Item 9 is "Hobbes Elementa Philosophica," which suggests a 1647 edition of *De Cive* (published in Freudenthal, *op. cit.* 158-165). For the passages cited, see the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Hamburg, 1670), praefatio and chap. 9. See also Paul Vernière, *Spinoza et la pensée française avant la Révolution* (Paris, 1954).
37. For Hobbes' later life, see his *THMV*, 9-14. For the adventures of La Peyrère, see his letter to Alexander VII, undated, at the end of the *Epistolae ad Philotimae* (Rome, Frankfort, 1658) with a translation into French published in Paris that same year; Bibliothèque Publique de Dijon, Fonds Baudot, n^{o} 82, La Peyrère to La Mare, September 9, 1661; Isaac La Peyrère, *Recueil de Lettres escrites à Monsieur le Comte de la Suze, pour l'obliger par raison à se faire Catholiqiue* (Paris, 1661), and *Suite des Lettres escrites à Monsieur le Comte de la Suze, pour*

l'obliger par raison à se faire Catholique (Paris, 1662). *Apologie de La Peyrère* (Paris, 1663).

38. For La Peyrère's later writings, see AC Ms. 193, *Reponse* (in La Peyrère's own hand) *de Lapeyrère aux Calomnies de Des Marais* [sic] *Ministre de Groningue*, pp, 34-36 (other copy also in La Peyrères's own hand in the Bibliothèque Municipale de Dôle, Ms. 107, AC Ms. 191, *Des Iuifs, Elus, Reietés, et Rapelés* (1670-1673), and Simon to La Peyrère, May 20, 1670 (criticizing the pre-Adamite theory), May 27, 1670 (apparently criticizing a draft of *Des Iuifs, Elus, Reietés, et Rapelés*), June 4, 1670 (on Chaldean astronomy), and Simon to Z. S. (reminiscences of La Peyrère), 1688 (all published in Richard Simon *Lettres Choisies de M. Simon* (Rotterdam, 1702) 2:1-28). For Simon's own controversial work, see Richard Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Paris, 1678; Amsterdam, 1680), Préface de l'Auteur. Interestingly, Simon's extreme dismemberment of the Canon prefigures the extreme qualifications of Joseph Blenkinsopp, in his stimulating *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York. 1992).
39. W.O.E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament* (1934), p. 13
40. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, parts 1 and 6.

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CONCLUSION

Elizabeth DePalma Digeser & Robert M. Frakes

In the 1951 Hollywood blockbuster "Quo Vadis" (a film adaptation of Henry Sienkiewicz's 1895 novel of the same name), after the evil Emperor Nero (d. 68 CE) persecutes Christians as scapegoats for his burning of Rome, he quickly falls from power as the city's poor rise up in revolution buoyed by the belief that God will destroy persecutors.[1] The film's plot reflects the traditional representation of evil, pagan Romans persecuting virtuous, pious Christians, an image in whose outlines the early fourth-century traces of the first Christian histories by Lactantius and Eusebius, are clear to read. Such a black-and-white representation of the relationship between Christians and so-called pagans, however, was also a powerfully enduring rhetorical strategy that these ancient church historians deployed, one asserting that fighting under the sign of Christ had brought the emperor Constantine (r. 306 – 337) a decisive Christian victory over his persecuting co-regents in a contest whose outcome was, historically, much more ambiguous. Indeed, after this victory at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, Constantine, together with his remaining imperial partner, Licinius, granted:

> … to Christians and others full liberty to observe that religion which each preferred; whence any Divinity whatsoever in the seat of the heavens may be propitious and kindly disposed to us and all who are placed under our rule…[and] conceded to other religions the right of open and free observance of their worship for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases; this regulation is made so that we may not seem to detract from any dignity or any religion.[2]

This famous passage from the law traditionally known as the Edict of Milan of 313 CE, not only confirmed an imperial policy of religious tolerance, but it also, in justifying the policy as a means to maintain divine protection, reveals how rhetorical strategies bound even tighter the interconnected spheres of politics and religion in the Later Roman Empire.

Historians of the late Roman world have long struggled to read the true character of late Roman religion and politics through the veil of rhetoric that our sources have woven. For example, rejecting the pious imperial religious reformer of the church historians, the nineteenth-century Swiss scholar Jacob Burckhardt saw Constantine as an irreligious player of *Realpolitik*, merely pretending to support the Christian religion in order to increase his political power. Burckhardt, accordingly, read the Christian historians as duped and Constantine's own words as duplicitous. Across his career, H. A. Drake has taken a more nuanced position. Rejecting both Burckhardt's atheist and the church historians' champion of episcopal Christianity, Drake maintains that Constantine was reaching out to multiple audiences in an effort to build common ground. In staking this claim, Drake has suggested that Christianity and fourth century "paganism" were not as irredeemably antagonistic as generations of church historians (often clerics themselves) had imagined. It is significant that this new approach to understanding Constantine comes from an American and so the first major scholar on Constantine to hail from a country where Church and State are officially separate.

The chapters in this volume, many taking their inspiration from Drake's sensitive conception of Constantine, not only provide further evidence for the coherence of his approach, but they also illustrate how this enriched understanding of late Roman rhetoric sharpens our understanding of the empire's tremendously wide-ranging and long-lasting legacy. The chapters from Marx-Wolf and DePalma Digeser to those of Fournier and Frakes, show that re-embedding the highly rhetorical works of late Roman historians (Ammianus Marcellinus and Eusebius) and theologians (Porphyry, Iamblichus, Eusebius, and Ambrose) in their legal, political and religious contexts lays bare how the rhetorical strategies of the authors worked and why they were deployed. Taking up the baton, Blodgett, Mazza, Raub Vivian, Tschen Emmons, and Sizgorich travel across the post Roman world and its borderlands and through the centuries. Understanding and unpacking the heritage of late Roman rhetoric allows them to understand better the religious and political context of the Huns, Byzantines, Irish monks, and Muslims who appropriated its techniques, strategies, and assumptions. Finally, the capstone chapter by Paul Sonnino explores the heritage of these traditions

against the goals and assumptions of a new Early Modern paradigm. In turn, the role of religion in politics and society would also change, as well as European Christianity itself. In the end, the chapters collected here in tribute to Hal Drake not only show how sensitivity to the interactions between politics, religion, and rhetoric in Late Antiquity enhances historical understanding, but, by implication, they suggest that such an approach might also be fruitful to comprehend the increasingly religious and polemical world in which we find ourselves.

NOTES

1. The 1951 film, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, was actually the fourth film adaptation of the novel. See J. Solomon, *The Ancient World in the Cinema* (New Haven and London, 2001), 10-15. The racy 1932 film "Sign of the Cross," directed by Cecil B. DeMille, also seems to be loosely based on the novel via its probable influence on Wilson Barrett's play of the same title.
2. Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 48. 2, tr. *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European history,* IV (Philadelphia, 1898-1912) (slightly adapted).

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INDEX